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T H E

# Rational Lovers.

A N O V E L.





THE  
RATIONAL LOVERS:  
*ix*  
OR, THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
Sir Charles Leufum,  
AND  
Mrs. Frances Fermor.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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V O L. I.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for FRANCIS NOBLE, at his Circulating Library, near Middle-Row, Holborn;

AND  
JOHN NOBLE, at his Circulating Library, St. Martin's Court, Leicester-Square.

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# ADVERTISEMENT

## To the PUBLIC.

*'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill  
Appear in writing or in judging ill;  
But of the two less dangerous is th' offence  
To tire our patience than mislead our sense:  
Some few in that, but numbers err in this,  
Ten censure wrong for one who writes amiss.*

POPE.

IT having been repeatedly asserted by the writer of the Impartial Review of new books in the London Magazine, (exclusively of condemning, in general and abusive terms, every Novel we publish, and, as we have reason to believe, frequently without reading them) that we keep in pay a set of needy authors to furnish us with a sufficient supply of new novels for publication; we do here call upon him to produce his authority for this assertion. In the mean time, in justification of ourselves from so injurious and malicious a charge, we declare, that we do not, nor ever did, keep any writers or writer in pay for such purpose; but, on the contrary, that all we have hitherto published have been sent to us unsolicited from their authors, without any stipulated pay, promise of reward, or previous agreement whatsoever, either by ourselves or any other person for us. And, moreover, that many of them are written by persons of rank, property and fortune, above accepting any other return for their labours than a few printed copies for themselves and friends.

We are loth to recriminate; but when men so far forget themselves as to assume an importance that does not belong to them, and to treat with unwarrantable rudeness all those they are pleaf-

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ed to dislike, it is but just to remind them of their insignificancy, and to reprove them for their impertinence. We will, therefore, beg leave to ask this gentleman, whether *he* can, with any degree of truth, exculpate *himself* from the imputation of writing for *hire*? and whether praise or dispraise is not often bestowed upon a work, merely as the will, caprice, or interests of his employers direct him?

It belongs to this species of critics alone to involve in their censure of books the sellers and publishers of them; for, till the writers of IMPARTIAL REVIEWS, &c. made their appearance, the bookseller, taking care to publish nothing contrary to religion, morality, decency, &c. passed, as he ought to do, unnoticed; and as he was no way entitled to any part of the *praise*, if the work had merit, so he partook not of the *blame* if it proved to have none. And, unless this rule be observed, we know not where these gentlemen will stop: in time they may take it into their heads to discharge their abuse upon the letter founder for casting, and the printer for furnishing the types for printing any work they may be determined not to approve of.

Stimulated by a laudable desire of appearing to the eye of the public in a more eligible light than that in which the pen of malevolence would place us, we have stated the affair truly as it stands between this pseudo-critic and ourselves, and shall leave it to candour to determine what degree of credit is due to a man devoted to a mercenary cause, and enlisted in the service of calumny.

Jan. 14, 1769.

FRANCIS NOBLE.  
JOHN NOBLE.

## REJOINDER.

FOR an answer, as it is called, to the above, the reader, if he pleases, may turn to the London Magazine, for last month, where he will find that the charge we have produced of the writer's unmannerly and unjust treatment of us as publishers, (a complaint we had principally in view) he has cautiously avoided taking the least notice of; contenting himself with general invectives against books and authors, of which, though the censure were just, we ought not to partake, for reasons already observed; with trifling evasions, repeated calumnies, and, to crown all, an eulogium on a work \* that he has laboured to condemn.

But there is one part of this pretended answer that we hold ourselves indispensably bound more particularly to reply to, as it calls our veracity in question. He is pleased to say, in return to our declaration of our never having hired authors to write for us, that "The Reviewers" (meaning himself) "are rather apprehensive that many people may be apt to dispute the reality of our assertion on this point." Now, what his *own real* sentiments may be upon this occasion, we are very little concerned about; but as we are anxiously desirous of standing fair in the opinion of the *public*, we will once more assure them, that the whole we have asserted, in our advertisement, upon that, as well as every other head, is most strictly true, and that we defy this detractor, or any one else, to prove the contrary.

Defamatory conjectures, unsupported by facts, though ever so boldly uttered, pass for nothing

\* *The Reclaimed Libertine.*

with the unprejudiced, when confronted by credible evidence, and serve only to shew a malignancy in their author. It is, therefore, become a duty, which he owes to himself, to acknowledge he has wronged us, unless he can produce some authority to countenance his slander.

It is to be lamented that men, whose learning and talents, properly directed, would do them honour, should so far debase themselves, for a little paltry hire, as to throw out abuse, (to which they would be ashamed to set their names) against those who have never injured them, and whose only fault is their being the publishers of a few harmless novels ; which, malice itself cannot deny, have at least this negative merit to recommend them, that their tendency is not to inflame the passions or corrupt the morals. Indeed it may be affirmed, because it can be affirmed with truth, that most of them may be read with improvement : and while this is the case, humanity, decency and justice, should teach men to censure with less acrimony ; or rather, to judge with the same degree of candour as they would wish to be judged by themselves.

F. NOBLE.  
J. NOBLE.

Feb. 2, 1769.

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T - H E

# RATIONAL LOVERS.

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## BOOK I.

SIR CHARLES LEUSUM danced with Miss Bloom at the R—— assembly.

Miss Bloom was at that time in her nineteenth year, tall, exceedingly genteel, and in features, as well as complexion, could vie with the most celebrated beauty then in town.

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Sir

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Sir Charles Leusum was no less handsome as a man : for with all the muscular strength of an Antinous, he had all the delicate softness of an Adonis : to be more particular, he was between four and five-and-twenty : well proportioned, and exquisitely handsome ; adorned also with every grace which can render a fine person alluring. He was possessed of a bright understanding, improved by a liberal education, and he had an heart feelingly alive to the most humane emotions ; benevolence and generosity were woven into his constitution : his address was also the most insinuating to be imagined, and he had the happy, but rare art, of making himself agreeable to all kinds of people.

With so many personal attractions bestowed on him by nature, and with so many acquired accomplishments, he could not but be a very desirable object in

in the eyes of Miss Bloom ; who was, indeed, not a less desirable one in *his*, “ being, of outward form elaborate, of inward less exact.”

The Lady to whose care Miss Bloom was trusted for that night, was Mrs. Fermor, who had been about six or seven years a widow, and having received some civilities from Mr. Bloom, she found herself unable to return them, but by inviting his daughter to spend a week or two with her ; and, in order to amuse her, had proposed taking her to an assembly within a mile of her abode.

Mrs. Napper, a neighbour of Mrs. Fermor’s, having a daughter nearly of Miss Bloom’s age, had offered to carry them in her coach, and her offer was readily accepted.

Mrs. Fermor, who lived a very retired life, and who seldom appeared in public places, was, however, an agreeable wo-

man; not handsome: but though nobody would say that she was, or that she had ever been so, every body allowed her to be, in the highest degree, amiable; and the more ready to make that allowance, as she did not seem to demand it.—She was then about thirty, genteelly made; her arms white and well turned; her neck of the same hue: but though her whole person seldom failed of pleasing, she could not be said to have any thing striking, her eyes excepted: her eyes, however, fine as they were, made no conquests, being eclipsed by the superior lustre of a toast under twenty.—Besides, Mrs. Fermor was looked upon, that evening, only as the *chaperon* of the charming Miss Bloom, and therefore appeared of no consequence.

Harriot Bloom was allowed, by every man present, to be a lovely young creature; but no man was so very ready  
to

to acknowledge the force of her attractions as Sir Charles Leufum.—No kind of gallantry did he omit to convince her that she filled him with rapturous sensations. So assiduous, indeed, was he in his behaviour to her, and so liberal, not to say lavish, of his civilities, that every woman round her, hated her exceedingly, because she was distinguished by a man so universally admired; but though every woman was, in her heart, her rival, no one felt herself more strongly so than her companion Miss Napper.

Bell Napper was a pretty girl enough, and might have done tolerable execution at an assembly, where Miss Bloom had not made her appearance: but wherever she appeared, all, whose hearts were not previously engaged, confessed her superior power, and even those attached to other women, could not but own that she was completely handsome. The

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female part of the company, indeed, were not so unanimous in their opinions about her: and, except Mrs. Fermor, very few were, on that night, willing to allow that she had any beauty at all.

Miss Napper, in their way home, declared that her lovely friend, (so she continually addressed herself to Miss Bloom, though she had not known her much above a fortnight) notwithstanding all the pains which she had taken about her dress, had never succeeded so ill. "Those pink ribbons, my dear, made you look quite pale. "Who me?" cried Miss Bloom; "did I look pale, Bell? I am certain that you are mistaken, for I had a monstrous colour, I never felt my face glow more in my life."

"When you was taken out by Sir Charles, my dear friend, you coloured a little, it is true; but before he offered you his hand, believe me, I thought that you was ready to faint." "Why,

" Why, to be sure, my dear," replied the beauty, with exulting accents, " one must be very insensible indeed, not to be animated when one receives flattering distinctions, from so fine a fellow as Sir Charles Leusum. His behaviour to me was really so particular, that it drew the eyes of the whole room upon me, and frequently threw me into the utmost confusion : he pressed me, madam," continued she, turning to Mrs. Fermor, " so earnestly, when he put me into the coach, to give him leave to wait on me tomorrow, that I ventured to tell him I was at your house, and should be glad to see him."

Mrs. Fermor, who had observed the attentions which he paid to Miss Bloom, and who, as a neighbour, had heard (for she was not personally acquainted with him) that he was not in his private character worse than, nor even so bad

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as, the majority of young men of fashion, and who had seen girls, though not many, make their fortunes by their beauty, assented with a bow.

Mrs. Fermor, however, though she assented in that manner to the reception of Sir Charles as a visiter to Miss Bloom, was not desirous of encouraging any gallantry between them in her house ; but, as she had a regard for the family of Harriot, and knew that she was to leave her in a few days, she thought it would be a pity to dash the pleasure which she expected, by starting any obstacles to it. Accordingly, the next day, Sir Charles made his appearance, was received with politeness by the lady of the house, and with a pleasure not easily to be concealed by Miss Bloom, to whom he behaved with a kind of respectful familiarity, taking no other notice of Mrs. Fermor than what a return to her politeness demanded.

This

This visit was followed by another of the same nature ; only as they became better acquainted, they appeared with much less reserve to each other.

Harriot Bloom would have been really sensible and agreeable enough to please a man of taste, even if she had not shone with so many personal charms : and as the qualities of the mind were not neglected by Sir Charles, he found himself very seriously captivated by this young lady. He had made some inquiries relating to her on the assembly-night, and was informed that she was the daughter of a gentleman with a moderate fortune, but good character, who lived at the distance of about twelve miles, and who had given her a liberal education ; but it was supposed that he could not, during his life, part with much money : her beauty, indeed, encouraged him to hope that she might marry advantageously

*without*, as he had taken care to prevent her from appearing much in public.

Miss Bloom had never been seen at the R—— assembly till that night, in consequence of a visit to Mrs. Fermor, who, being generally well-spoken of for her discretion, was deemed by her father to be a safe companion.

As Sir Charles Leusum's estate was large, he wanted not a fortune with a wife. Before he accidentally met with Miss Bloom, he had not, indeed, thought of domesticating himself so early in life, imagining that he might, if he waited ten years, secure an heir to his title and estate : but her person and manners were so uncommonly engaging, that he found himself more attached to her than he expected to be on so short an acquaintance.

Sir Charles, however, was not perfectly happy to feel himself so violently charmed

charmed with a girl, whose behaviour soon convinced him, that any freedoms in his carriage would be properly resented ; yet he could not deny himself the pleasure of seeing her.

The artful Harriot soon felt her consequence, and determined to improve it, by exerting all her powers to please ; and not only to please him, but to fix him, if possible, unalterably her's. During her stay at Mrs. Fermor's, Miss Napper, who had no mean opinion of her own charms, flattered herself that if she could but cultivate an acquaintance with Sir Charles, she might have a chance to supplant her dear friend. To execute this scheme Mr. and Mrs. Napper, though she had not communicated it to them, gave her sufficient opportunities, by putting no restraint upon her actions. She, therefore, always contrived to call on Miss Bloom, whenever she imagined

that the Baronet might be with her, and, throwing herself perpetually in his way, availed herself of every art to let him see that she was ready to accept of his addresses, if he had been disposed to make them to her.

Miss Napper's forward carriage, as it had not the wished-for effect upon Sir Charles, who rather disregarded her, there being a pertness in her manner totally disagreeable to him, served only to render Harriot's triumph the more complete; and she exulted not a little at the particular attentions paid to her: at the same time pretending the greatest friendship for her dear Bell, whom she kept near her, as a conqueror exhibits his slaves to magnify his military importance.

While the increasing interviews between Sir Charles and Miss Bloom increased his inclination for her, the time for her departure from Mrs. Fermor's arrived,

arrived, and that lady carried her home. Miss Bloom, had she not already in her own mind staid long enough to make Sir Charles desirous of following her, would have invented some excuse to postpone her return to her father's : but as she was vain enough to believe that she was sure of her man, she went off in high spirits ; first taking leave of her dear Miss Napper, who insisted upon her writing to her, and acquainting her with all Sir Charles's proceedings.

In their way to Mrs. Bloom's, Mrs. Fermor, who thought Harriot an exceeding fine girl as to her person, and who knew that she did not want understanding ; conjecturing too from the observations which she had made on Sir Charles's behaviour, during his visits to her at *her* house, that he was seriously attached to her, ventured to give her a little advice, which might, she imagined, if followed, not only forward a marriage so greatly

greatly to her advantage, but tend also to ensure, in a great measure, her subsequent felicity. As that advice was given with the sincerest intention to promote that felicity, from pure friendship to her family, and real regard to herself, she had some reason to expect that it would not be slighted.

Mrs. Fermor, having left Harriot safe at her father's, returned home, thoroughly satisfied with having so well got rid of a charge, which she had only undertaken, in order to repay an obligation she deemed due to her family, as her mode of life was entirely different from that led by the fashionable world. She had not been at an assembly for some years; she would not have thought of appearing in so public a light on the abovementioned evening, but to oblige Miss Bloom, who, like other young girls,

was

was never so well pleased, as when she was seen and admired.

Mrs. Fermor, thinking that such a pleasure at such a time of life might be, with moderation, indulged without any impropriety, was very ready to comply with Harriot's request; especially as Mrs. Napper, who was her near neighbour, had offered to take them in her coach, to please her daughter, who had vanity enough to believe that she should eclipse Miss Bloom, with whom she had commenced an acquaintance during her residence at Mrs. Fermor's.

Miss Napper was, indeed, of all the little party, the only person in the least dissatisfied with it. *She* was extremely disconcerted to find that Sir Charles appeared entirely devoted to Harriot, and had taken very little notice of *her*; yet, as a deficiency in the powers of pleasing was the last reason to which she was willing

ling to attribute the disagreeable preference which she perceived, she rather ascribed it to artifice in her rival, and began to form schemes for prejudicing Sir Charles against Harriot, and substituting herself in her place.

Miss Napper had no occasion, however, to form a plan of that sort, for Miss Bloom most indiscreetly gave her a fine opportunity to effect her purpose.

Harriot, with all her art, was guilty of a capital weakness ; a weakness into which vain people are very apt to fall ; for she was so well satisfied with her abilities to please, both as a friend and a mistress, that she concluded she was no less agreeable in the eyes of Miss Napper, than she was lovely in those of Sir Charles.

The cunning Bell had, it is true, by her fawning behaviour, greatly contributed to lead her into that belief, in  
order

order to work her up the more easily to betray every secret of her heart : and the credulous Harriot, flushed with the hopes of being Lady Leusum, was but too eager to inform her friends with how much rapidity Sir Charles made his approaches : he had not yet delivered a formal declaration ; but, from the force of self-flattery, she pre-enjoyed all the advantages which could arise from his rank and fortune.

This intelligence she transmitted in a letter, which chiefly contained a description of the delicious life which she would lead by pursuing all kinds of fashionable pleasure, and by being the object of general admiration at Carlisle-house, Almack's, and other magnificent assemblies, at which she had never appeared, without a single word concerning the man who was to confer all that happiness,

by

by taking her, without a farthing, to share his affluence and his affection.

Bell, whose heart was almost ready to burst with jealousy and envy, seized this moment, in answer to all those fine dreams of pleasure, to ask rather a critical question. "Tell me truly, my dear Harriot," said she, "do you really love Sir Charles Leusum?"

Unluckily for Miss Bloom, the baronet had just been with her when she received this letter; and having been particularly charmed with her that day, had discovered uncommon rapture, and had, in the tenderness and generosity of his heart, made her some valuable and elegant presents.

Elated with her success, she seized her pen, the moment he left her, and, in full confidence, wrote the following lines:

To

*To Miss NAPPER.*

YOU ask me, my dear girl, if I love Sir Charles Leusum : what a question ! certainly, it could have never entered into any head but your own, to have dreamt of such a thing. You must suppose me to have very little knowledge of the world, if you imagine that I can be guilty of so great a weakness as to love the man whom I intend to marry, merely to make my fortune. You will tell me, perhaps, that Sir Charles is one of the handsomest fellows you ever saw ; possibly the very handsomest in the world. I am very ready to allow him to be so. You will add also, "I make no doubt but that he is good-humoured, generous, and tender." — Granted. He is so in a superlative degree : and therefore, child, I am perpetually upon my guard, lest, enchanted

by

by the charms of his person, or intoxicated by his insinuating behaviour, I should give way to an inclination which must inevitably destroy all my future schemes of felicity. Magnificence, attendance, dress, admiration, employ all my thoughts ; I have not a single one to bestow on the poor deluded creature, seduced by my wicked eyes ; nor a leisure moment at present to write a longer letter to my dearest Bell, who, I am perfectly assured, will excuse this short, but, I hope satisfactory, epistle, from her ever sincere and faithful friend,

HARRIOT BLOOM.

The receipt of this letter gave the highest joy to Miss Napper, sighing to allure Sir Charles from her rival, as she hoped to make it subservient to that purpose. It roused in her mind a variety of reflections ; and various were the methods

methods she thought of to procure the conveyance of so curious an epistle to Sir Charles. The uncertainty she was in, however, with regard to the reception of his sentiments concerning it, for a while gave a check to her designs. At last, she fancied, that if she carried it to Mrs. Fermor, (having all the reason in the world to believe, from the rectitude of that lady's general conduct, that she would not join with her young friend in imposing upon him) and if Mrs. Fermor dispatched it to Sir Charles, he would certainly come to her to complain of the treatment which he had received: she fancied also that she might then meet him there, warm with resentment, and, with all imaginable ease, undermine her friend.

Thus determined, she immediately went to Mrs. Fermor, told her the occasion of her visit, and, having communicated the contents of Harriot's letter,

ter, asked her, if she could bear to con-nive at an imposition upon one of the most amiable and deserving men in the world.

Mrs. Fermor, who was never in a hurry to declare her opinion, especially upon a subject which demanded some deliberation, took the letter, and looking it over, said, with great composure, “This requires a considerate perusal.”

“A considerate perusal!” cried Miss Napper, in a fright, lest she should not fall into the plan which she had drawn out for her, “sure madam, you will think it proper to shew it immediately to Sir Charles Leusum.”

Mrs. Fermor, after a moment’s hesitation, replied, “You may, Miss Napper, depend upon my acting in this nice affair according to the best of my judgment, if you will leave the letter with me.—You have no doubt, I hope?”

Bell,

Bell, who thought that she had gone too far to recede, after a multitude of invectives against her friend, left the letter, though she left it rather unwillingly, telling Mrs. Fermor that she would call on her again the next day. " You will then, Madam, I hope," added she, " have taken all proper measures to prevent so charming a fellow from being duped by so designing a girl."

Mrs. Fermor, who really and fully intended to act, as she had said, according to the best of her judgment, having presently discovered that the violent friendship of Miss Napper for Miss Bloom, and her prodigious solicitude to hinder Sir Charles from being drawn in, were only stratagems for the attaching of him to herself, sat down and wrote the following letter to the last-mentioned young lady.

To

*To Miss Bloom.*

IT is with the sincerest concern, my dear Miss Bloom, that I find myself so much mistaken in *you*, whose mind, I had really believed, was as faultless as your face: but your sentiments, with regard to Sir Charles Leusum, are so very opposite to that purity of manners and rectitude of intention, which can alone render you happy, that I have, though unwillingly, resolved to endeavour to prevail on you to change them. I am but too sensible, before I begin this arduous task, that you will throw away my letter at the first opening of it, as supposing that the opinion of a woman so many years older than yourself, a woman in a manner secluded from the world, will be entirely unworthy of your notice; absolutely beneath your attention. Reflect, however, a moment, Harriot, before

before you commit it to the flames. It may possibly remind you of a duty which you owe yourself, as well as *that* world in which you are so desirous to make a shining figure.

I would not willingly believe it possible for a young creature endued with so excellent an understanding, blest, apparently, with a sweet disposition, and who has received a polished education, to be either so very ignorant, or so extremely malevolent as to be capable of thinking in the manner in which you expressed your sentiments in your last letter to Miss Napper (the faithullest of all female friends). From the freedom, indeed, with which you have unbosomed yourself, and from the confidence which you have reposed in *her*, I am, I confess, inclined to imagine that your letter was really written in raillery, and designed to conceal the discovery

of too strong a partiality for Sir Charles, that your modesty might not be shocked by avowing a passion for a man so evidently formed by nature and education to inspire the tenderest emotions.—But if you seriously felt all that you said ; if you have actually no other view in marrying Sir Charles Leufum, than to make an extensive exhibition of your person, which ought to be confined to his admiration alone ; and to dissipate his fortune in all kinds of extravagance, I verily look upon your marriage with him as the greatest affront which can be offered to an husband : nay, I look upon such a marriage in an infamous light ;—for you certainly are, in that case, guilty of prostitution : such a marriage must assuredly produce mutual abhorrence, and, consequently, mutual unhappiness.

But before I make so severe a conclusion, let me ask you, seriously, what are  
your

your motives for marrying Sir Charles? Do you wish to be united to him because he is the handsomest of men, or because he has a larger fortune than any of the lovers who have hitherto made their addresses to you are possessed of; or because he has a title and rank superior to them?—If either of these reasons, or if all of them, induce you to accept of him; if you are actuated by no other, you will, then, do both him and yourself an injury. But if you think him the most amiable man with whom you have ever been acquainted; if he treats you with so much esteem, respect, and affection as to make you feel the same esteem and love for him, then indeed, you may safely venture, as you will have no reason to reproach yourself, however altered he may hereafter be, and as you will be more capable of regaining a heart which may, with the best intentions in the world, not-

withstanding all your attractions, be sometimes inclined to wander.

You ought, also, as you are so inferior to Sir Charles in point of birth and fortune, to be sensible of *some* gratitude for the partiality which he has discovered for you; that sensation, joined to a discreet tenderness, will ever make you pay a proper attention to your duty, and an implicit regard to every thing that can possibly tend to contribute to his happiness, as well as to your own. Consider, therefore, my dear Harriot, look thoroughly into yourself before you engage: admiration and flutter may for a while render you as deaf to my advice, as to the voice of reason: but when youth and beauty are vanished, as vanish they certainly will before you are ready to part with them, how very hateful will you be to yourself! how very despicable to others! and what a contemptible burthen

burthen will you be to your husband, if you have no taste for other amusements, no relish for more substantial, more durable pleasures than those above-mentioned, in which you declaredly place your supreme felicity, to the utter exclusion of the more noble and tender passions!—If Sir Charles had taken improper liberties with you, or addreſſed you as a mistress, I ſhould have been the first to have advised you to guard well your eyes and ears againſt one ſo particularly formed to become a ſuccel-ful ſeducer: but as he has behaved in the moſt open, in the moſt honourable manner to you, how could you think of returning ſuch love, and ſuch generosity, with indifference or neglect? Believe me, Harriot, there are but very few men who love with ſuch diſinterested affection as Sir Charles Leufum; receive him, therefore, as a blessing from Heaven;

C 3                   endeavour,

endeavour, by every act of modest tenderness and affectionate esteem, to secure an heart so deserving of a faithful one in return, and by so doing, render your union reciprocally happy. I send back to you your letter to Bell Napper, who gave it into my hands that I might make Sir Charles acquainted with your sentiments. Take care for the future, how you place any confidence in such pretended friends, and thank Heaven for having saved you from being expos'd to the contempt of the man who, as he has hitherto merited your esteem, will, I hope, have no occasion to change his present good opinion of you. I am,

My dear Harriot,

Yours, &c.

F. FERMOR.

As

As soon as Mrs. Fermor had finished her letter she inclosed *that* with which Miss Napper had entrusted her, and dispatched it to Miss Bloom by a special messenger, who was ordered not to stay for an answer.

Miss Bloom happened to be alone when she received Mrs. Fermor's letter, she read it over hastily with the utmost astonishment, and was beginning to re-peruse it, as it appeared to her a very extraordinary piece, but Sir Charles's servant rapping briskly at the door, she precipitately thrust it into her pocket, and, flying to the glass, employed herself in setting her hair off to the greatest advantage. Scarce had she time to adjust that important business before the Baronet entered.

They spent near a couple of hours exactly as two such young people might be supposed to do in their situation : she,

in playing off a thousand airs and graces, without remembering a syllable of Mrs. Fermor's advice to her ; and he, in making a profusion of fine speeches.

Luckily, for *him*, he then asked her to favour him with a song to her guitar.

She rang the bell for a servant to fetch her music-book : unfortunately for *her*, the book was mislaid.

Eager, however, to exhibit herself, in order to gain still greater admiration, she ran up stairs to search for it.

As soon as she had left the room, Mrs. Fermor's letter which, from being hurried into her pocket at the news of Sir Charles's approach, lay on the ground fully exposed to his view.

Without the least design to indulge his curiosity he rose to take it up : but as she had folded it back to read it with more ease, he plainly discovered his own name.

So

So unexpected a discovery excited in him a strong desire to see what share he had in the contents of the letter: he, therefore, hastily, but securely, clapped it into his pocket.

When the song was ended, when a few rapturous compliments were bestowed upon *that*, and upon the performer, he took his leave.

Safely seated in his chariot from the eye of observation, he immediately and very carefully perused the manuscripts in his possession.

They at first filled him with indignation and surprize, but they in a short time became more valuable to him than any which he could have procured from the rich collection in the British Museum.

It has already been said that Mr. Bloom's house was about twelve miles from Mrs. Fermor's, and as Sir Charles Leufum's was about two from that lady's,

he had fourteen miles to ride home to dinner. Not having been used to early hours, he was not expected by his people till near five o'clock.

During his stay at Mr. Bloom's there fell so violent a shower that the roads, (it was in the latter season) very wet before, were rendered consequently more heavy by it.—His progress therefore could not be so rapid as usual.

Within three miles of his own house, in crossing a common, he saw, at a little distance, two women very neatly dressed, who appeared by their attitudes much terrified: a fellow, at the same time, was running from them with a pistol in his hand.

Sir Charles, immediately guessing that he was a foot-pad, pulled the string, got out of his chariot, and, going up to the frightened females, found one to be Mrs. Fermor, and the other her maid.

He

He very politely accosted her, and asked her if he was mistaken in imagining that she had just been robbed.

She told him he was *not*; adding, that the fellow had escaped both with her money and watch. "Not that the watch was of great value, but I was, nevertheless, sorry to be obliged to part with it." Sir Charles instantly ordered his two servants on horseback to pursue the fellow, while he insisted on the lady's getting into his chariot as it began to rain, and as she very humanely expressed some concern for her maid, he offered to accommodate *her* also: but Mrs. Fermor, taking off her own cloak, made her servant put it over that which she had on, and then, bidding her hurry home, desired that she might no longer detain Sir Charles, of whose civility she was, at first, extremely loath to accept.

C 6                      Upon

Upon his enquiring how she came there at that time of the day, she told him that she had taken advantage of the fine morning to visit a friend about eight miles distant, and had set out on her return, soon after the violent shower was over, fearing that another might prevent her from getting home before dark.—“I was attacked and robbed,” continued she, “just as your chariot was coming up, the sight of which, I imagine, frightened the fellow, and occasioned his departure from me sooner than he probably had intended.”

Sir Charles, who, from the letter which he had just perused, could not but look upon her as a good friend of his, and a very sensible woman into the bargain, rejoiced at an opportunity of making himself useful to her, and when they stopped at her door, desired her to give him leave to wait on her in, to see how  
she

she found herself after her fright, and to remain till his servants returned with some account of the foot-pad.

Mrs. Fermor could not well refuse his request ; and, without once thinking whether he had dined, asked him if he would accept of a dish of tea.

Sir Charles, never better pleased with an adventure in his life, replied, that he was just going to ask the same favour.

He presently forgot that he had had no dinner : Mrs. Fermor's tea and bread and butter were excellent : her conversation was sensible, easy, and polite ; and he passed his time very agreeably till his servants returned ; who informed him that they had overtaken the villain, and carried him before a justice of peace ; and that he was secured for that night, in order to be sent to the county jail the next day.

Sir

Sir Charles seemed very much to approve of the proceedings of his domestics, and commended them for their spirit and dispatch : he, then, turning to Mrs. Fermor, whose approbation he expected to see added to his own, discovered that she changed colour, and was become extremely serious.

Having dismissed his servants, he asked her hastily, if she found herself not well.

She looked a little confused, and said, " You will undoubtedly think me very particular, Sir Charles, when, instead of thanking you for the trouble you have given yourself in endeavouring to restore my watch and money to me, I tell you that I shall never recover them ; because I shall never be able to consent to prosecute a poor wretch for such trifles, which the utmost distress, probably, compelled to take from me.— You will, doubtless, condemn these sentiments : I can

can even guess, I imagine, what you will say against me : but be that as it will, I cannot, I know, do what you are going to inform me I ought, meerly to promote the public good."

" Certainly I shall," replied he with a smile, " and confess I am surprized to find a lady of Mrs. Fermor's excellent understanding and judgment alledge any thing against it."

" No flattery," Sir, said she, " I do not desire such high compliments.—I may possibly be at this time acting against my own judgment, but compassion takes the lead so strongly in my mind, that every thing is overpowered by it."

" Heavens ! madam," replied the Baronet, " compassion ! compassion for a foot-pad !—A wretch who publickly violates the peace of society ! You have not surely considered the nature of his crime, nor the fatal consequences with which

which lenity to lawless ruffians of his stamp must be inevitably attended."—But seeing her appear still more serious, "If I may," continued he, with a smile, "give credit to the avowal of your sentiments from your own hand, you have the greatest aversion to all kinds of injustice whatever."

She looked surprized.

"Pray Sir Charles," said she, "how came you so well acquainted with *my* sentiments?"

"I hope, Madam," replied he, "that I cannot be totally ignorant of them, when I have them in my pocket: still less so when I am indebted to them for the narrowest escape from the worst of all evils.—Your watch and your purse, Mrs. Fermor (they must be restored to you) however valuable, are not to be mentioned with the loss of honour, of peace, and of every thing that is dear to

to man: severe losses all! from which you, like a guardian angel, have saved me."

"I cannot possibly comprehend you," said Mrs. Fermor.

"No?" replied Sir Charles—"What then did you mean, my dear Mrs. Fermor, by writing that admirable, that most sensible letter to the little hypocrite Miss Bloom, when I was upon the very point of taking her for ever to my arms?—Oh! you have saved me from destruction.—But though I, perhaps, owe my escape in some measure to chance, as you, Madam, were the first cause of it, permit me to pay my most grateful and respectful acknowledgments to you."

Mrs. Fermor then recollecting what she had written to Harriot, blushed, and no longer denied it.—"I cannot, however," continued she, "in any manner, account for your having it in your pocket."

"How

“ How I came by it,” said he, “ I will presently inform you : but though I must ever esteem you for the charming sentiments which you so generously endeavoured to instil into the corrupt heart of that pretty little devil ; had I not also, as I said before, been indebted to accident, how should I have avoided the cruel snare which she had spread for me ? You, my good friend, you kindly strove to make her think and act in a rational manner, yet there is all the reason in the world to believe that she was too strongly intoxicated with the love of power and pleasure to listen to your excellent advice.—What then would have become of me if I had married her ?”

“ If you will give yourself time to consider,” said Mrs. Fermor, “ you will, I believe, be convinced that I could not act otherwise than I did. The letter  
which

which Bell Napper put into my hands with her rival's, plainly discovered that she had a design upon you herself : could I therefore, with tolerable prudence, send it to a man with whom I was but slightly acquainted ? Could I depend upon the reality of Harriot's sentiments ? So far from entertaining such a supposition, I very much, at this moment, question the sincerity of them.—But supposing them to have been the effusions of her heart, could I expose the child of my friend to the loss of so advantageous, so desirable a match, merely upon receiving an account of her behaviour from her envious, her pretended friend ?—In such a situation I could only endeavour to awaken in Harriot, a just notion of honour, rectitude, and tenderness, and to make her thoroughly aware of the manifest injury which she was going to do, not only you but herself.—Ought I,

Si

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Sir Charles," continued she, "to have exposed a poor weak girl, who, entirely for want of discretion, was hurrying to her ruin?"

"I allow, my dear Mrs. Fermor," replied Sir Charles, "that you have acted with the greatest delicacy in an affair which necessarily required it; but give me leave to rejoice at my very seasonable deliverance which is still owing to you, as your incomparable letter was the eventual cause of it."

"Do you, then, really believe," said Mrs. Fermor, "that Harriot Bloom is so void of reason, so regardless of honour as she appears to be? for my part, I once thought, I own, that her letter might have been in a ludicrous style, on purpose to conceal her tenderness for you."

"For me!" exclaimed the Baronet, "tenderness for me?—no, no, my dear Madam,

Madam, she is incapable of feeling it for any man.—I will confess, indeed, that her extreme beauty dazzled me, and that the dignity which she kept up, if I may properly call it so, awed me, and prevented me from harbouring any hopes of gaining her upon easier terms : but as I now am acquainted with her sentiments, I would not accept of her even upon the easiest.—Love, disinterested love alone shall be the bait to lure me. I thank Heaven, and you, Madam, for being, under Heaven, instrumental to my preservation, and if I am ever so drawn in again, may I be deserted by Providence and you!"

" I never was, I never will be a match-maker, Sir Charles," said Mrs. Fermor ; " I feel, it is true, for this silly girl, but I cannot bring myself to say any thing in defence of her conduct till I am sure she deserves it.—Is it not hard, however,

to

to condemn her before she has had a fair trial? possibly, when she is convinced of her error, she may mend."

"Her letter, Madam, to Miss Napper," replied Sir Charles eagerly, "can neither be defended nor excused.—What you wrote to her was in the highest degree judicious and persuasive, but, from a recollection of her manners, now my eyes are opened, I am pretty certain that she can never be either a suitable wife, or a desirable mistress for me. A woman destitute of tenderness cannot allure, much less fix an heart of sensibility.—We will, therefore, leave her to follow her own suggestions, be they good or bad."

Sir Charles then turned the conversation to other subjects, on all which Mrs. Fermor acquitted herself to so much advantage, that, after having assured her he

he had never spent an evening so agreeably, he took his leave.

The next morning, as soon as Mrs. Fermor had breakfasted, her maid told her that there was a woman who appeared to be in a great deal of trouble, and begged to speak with her.

On being admitted, the poor woman came to the parlour door, and throwing herself directly upon her knees, cried, with a voice scarcely audible, "Oh Madam, save—for the love of Heaven, save my husband."—

Her sighs and sobs prevented all farther utterance.

Mrs. Fermor, having desired her to rise, took a survey of her person, which, notwithstanding the apparent severity of her distress, seemed to be very beautiful: beautiful, in spite of her extreme leanness, and death-like complexion, in spite of

of the rags and dirt with which she was disfigured.

In obedience to Mrs. Fermor's request she rose, and with a modest, downcast look, while tears streamed fast from her swelled eyes, intreated to be heard a moment, owning at the same time that she hardly knew how to deliver what she had to say, it was so affecting.

Mrs. Fermor, who was struck with the beauty of her person, and who thought that there was something uncommon in her manner, something, at least, far superior to the appearance which she made, desired her to sit down, and take time to recollect what she had to communicate.

"Oh! Madam," replied the poor creature, with a heart plainly bursting with shame and grief, "you are, I see, all goodness: it is that which chears me a little, and enables me to relate my sad

sad sad story.—But I dare not sit in your presence.—I am not now worthy.—Oh! Madam, I was not always the wretched creature you behold me. My father enjoyed a tolerable income; my mother was the best of women. I was their only daughter; they brought me up with all possible care and indulgence, and I—to make short my story—I cannot go on—returned all their indulgence and care by marrying a gentleman, a near neighbour, against *their* consent, and without the approbation of *his* parents.—I committed a great folly—I was guilty of a crime—to prove disobedient to such kind friends who had my welfare so much at heart, though fortune had not furnished them with the means of providing for me.—But I have been justly punished by all righteous Heaven.—My father could not spare any thing to promote my settling in the world, and therefore,

would have persuaded me to marry a rich merchant who had long liked me: but I could not prevail on myself to sacrifice inclination to duty.—My favoured lover, at the same time, urged me vehemently against what he called legal prostitution. I was easily induced to be governed by his opinion, and eloped one night with him, when all the family were asleep. We were married the next day, and from that day he has treated me with the greatest tenderness: but his father, a man with a handsome fortune, was so enraged at him for marrying against *his* inclination, that he turned him out of his house, and soon after, having disinherited him, died. My husband, who was not designed to follow business by his father, had not consequently been brought up to any: he endeavoured however to procure employment, but met with so many, and such various kinds

kinds of disappointment, that, with the anxiety of his mind, occasioned by his unsuccessful endeavours, and the increase of our family (for we had in less than three years, three children) he was thrown into a severe illness, during which I, though big with child, and being obliged to attend the rest, young and helpless, laboured as well as I could to supply their necessities.

" My husband had, during his illness, recovered so far as to be able to go abroad ; but was still in a weak and languid condition, and so deeply in debt that it was next to impossible for him to think of extricating himself from his embarrassments.—The dreadful reflections on his deplorable situation, added to our domestic distress, for we had not a bit of bread to give to our almost famished little ones, plunged him into despair, and made him guilty of an ac-

tion the recollection of which stabs me to the soul.—Oh! Madam,” continued she, bursting again into an agony of tears, “ it was he, it was my husband—that I should live to say so!—the husband on whom I doated ; whom, in spite of his atrocious crime, I must still fondly love—oh! Madam, it was he—how shall I proceed?—who robbed you yesterday.”

Here her articulation was suspended by quick-heaving sighs and flowing tears; but she still endeavoured, though deprived of the powers of utterance, by uplifted hands, and the most striking marks of supplication, to solicit Mrs. Fermor to spare her husband.

Mrs. Fermor was so affected with the unhappy stranger’s narrative that she could not, without the greatest difficulty, refrain from weeping, so much was she melted at it :—touched with the tender-  
est

est compassion, she hastened to relieve her. Putting a guinea into her hand, she said to her, "Be comforted, go, provide bread for your children, and be assured that I will not appear against your husband, whom you will, I hope, make sensible of the greatness of his crime, and prevail on him to turn his thoughts on some other method of gaining a provision for his family.—Nor let either him or you be over anxious, or driven to despondence: use all your honest efforts to acquire the necessaries of life, and should they even fail for a time, wait patiently, and trust in that providence who never absolutely forsakes the virtuous."

The poor woman, while Mrs. Fermor was thus speaking, had again fallen on her knees, and was pouring forth the gratitude of her heart, when Sir Charles Leufsum entered the parlour.

He passed her, and addressing himself to Mrs. Fermor, told her, that he was now come to see how she did after her fright, and to know if she was still resolved not to prosecute the fellow.

"I am still in the same mind, Sir Charles," said she, with regard to the prosecution of him, but if I had changed my resolution, *here*," pointing to the unfortunate creature, who was almost dying with terror at what she heard Sir Charles say, "is a sufficient apology for my conduct. "But go," continued Mrs. Fermor to her, "go to your husband; you may depend upon my promise."

The wretched petitioner arose, and with uplifted hands and eyes, cried, as she was going out of the room, "May the merciful God of Heaven reward you!"

"Behold there Sir," said Mrs. Fermor, "as compassionate an object as I ever met

met with : she is the wife of the unhappy man whom you would persuade me to ruin, and, in spite of his villainy, still loves him.—Tell me Sir Charles, can there be any sorrow superior to hers ?”

Mrs. Fermor then related her story to the Baronet, and had the satisfaction to see him much moved at it : so much indeed, that he immediately put five guineas into her hand, and begged her to convey them to the miserable family.

She praised his humanity in the highest terms, and intreated him, by the farther exertion of it, to procure the poor creature’s releasement.

“ That I will do, immediately,” replied he, “ but you must give me leave to call on you on my way home.”

She returned the money to him, which he had just given her, desiring him to bestow it himself.

He then left her for about a couple of hours.

When he came back, he seemed to be in some emotion. "I never was so much affected," said he, "as at the meeting of these unhappy people, who are, I verily believe, a worthy couple, strange as those expressions may sound. Upon my soul, they drew tears from my eyes, and every shilling out of my pocket: and yet be assured, Mrs. Fermor, it was not the description of their severe poverty, nor the beauty of the poor miserable wife which struck me so forcibly, as the affecting concern which she expressed at her husband's having been guilty of so criminal an action (which she imputed entirely to his marrying her, and loading himself with a family; as he never was before, she believed guilty of a base thought); and his humiliated penitence, begging her forgiveness as often as he implored

implored the pardon of Heaven, for having so cruelly deceived her. " You will love me no longer Molly," cried he, with looks and sighs, as if his heart was ready to break, " now you know me so unworthy of you.—Oh ! that I had died in my first moments of existence, I should not then have become so despicable a wretch in the eyes of the dearest, kindest, best of women!"—But I cannot repeat all that he uttered : no words can do justice to the pathetic scene. I have brought Madam, however, your watch and money — presenting them to her — and I will make it my business to settle these people in a way which may place them above temptation."

" You are justly entitled to more thanks from me Sir Charles," said Mrs. Fermor, " for that last resolution, than for the trouble which you have given youself in recovering my property."

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" And

" And I, Madam, am under more obligations to you than I can possibly discharge for the recovery of my senses. I have written a few lines to the lady, and have brought them with me, that they may be favoured with your approbation, before I transmit them to her."

" They are, I dare say, extremely proper," replied she, " at least you are certainly the best judge of what you ought to think of Miss Bloom, whose folly very much, I confess, excites my compassion."

" After having just been witness to so striking a proof of the goodness of your heart, Mrs. Fermor," said Sir Charles, " I ought not, indeed, to impeach your judgment, but I do not, I declare, feel myself inclined to pity Miss Bloom. How widely different has her behaviour been from that of the poor woman whom you have just relieved! She, with beauty, when  
in

in its full lustre equal to Miss Bloom's, free from pride, vanity, or ambition, followed the dictates of a heart thoroughly susceptible of the tender passion, and ventured to ruin herself, rather than to oppose the man she loved : while, on the other hand, Harriot, not satisfied with a heart of which she thought proper to accept only with a view to execute her own mercenary purposes, without a single spark of affection, would, merely to gratify her destructive passions to the most extravagant height, have sacrificed the pleasure, peace, and honour of the man who loved her.—Who, now, in your opinion, is the better woman?"

" But will you not make a little allowance for a woman's being particularly handsome ? It is barely possible for a fine young girl, followed, admired, and flattered, to be totally free from vanity.

For my part, I always make great allowances for young women in such critical situations, and were I a man, I should, think myself obliged to make still greater; because I should necessarily be conscious that I contributed not a little to render them so by admiring and complimenting them."

" You have a happy singularity in your sentiments, Madam," replied Sir Charles, " which elevates you above any of your sex who have engaged my attention."

" If you really think so, Sir Charles," answered she with a smile " you will be induced to soften your resentment against poor Harriot.

" Upon my honour" said he, " she is not worth it. Merely not to keep the girl in suspence about me, I intend to dispatch these lines, if you do not discover strong marks of disapprobation,  
at

at the hearing of them." He then took the letter out of his pocket and read it :

*To Miss Bloom.*

MADAM,

AFTER the discovery which I have just made, most fortunately, of your sentiments, you will not be, I imagine, surprized, if you never see, or hear again from,

Your once devoted,

CHARLES LEUSUM.

"What do you say to this laconic epistle, Mrs. Fermor?" continued he, perceiving that she was in a little *reverie*.

"I have already," replied she, "delivered my thoughts very freely, Sir Charles. I feel for Harriot; but if you really do not intend to renew your addresses, you certainly act with honour

to

to inform her at once of your intentions."

"I thank you Madam," said Sir Charles, "I am flattered by every mark of your approbation; but methinks, that little impertinent querist Bell Napper ought to be punished for being false to her friend; though, as I have been considerably benefited," added he, "by her infidelity, I may, I think, very justly spare her."

"Indeed, I think so," said Mrs. Fermor; "you may make yourself quite easy about them both, for they, like other criminals, will assuredly be punished for the faults which they have committed by the reproaches of their own reflections."

"I have much to say, and much to hear on that subject," replied Sir Charles, "but time (looking at his watch) will not permit me at present—

You

You will give me leave to visit you again?"

A modest curtsey, as he flew out of the room, was all Mrs. Fermor's answer.

He had not long been gone before Miss Napper knocked at the door.

As Mrs. Fermor had resolved never to admit her again, she had ordered her servants not to deny her, being very singular on such occasions in her adherence to truth, but to say that she was engaged.

"That is impossible," said the young lady, trying to force her way in, "for I just saw Sir Charles come out, and I *must* see her."

"I cannot let you in, Madam," replied the maid, "contrary to my mistress's orders."

"Go, then, and tell your mistress," answered Miss Napper, reddening with indignation, "that I insist upon having  
the

the letter which I left with her on Monday.”

The maid went in, and brought back word that Sir Charles Leusum had got it.

This disagreeable intelligence greatly tended to soften the features of the incensed Miss Napper, who replied, with a quite different tone, “ Well, well, let your mistress know that I want vastly to see her, and desire she will let me know when she is at leisure.”

With those words she tripped away, flushed with hopes that her ingenious scheme would prove successful: though she scarce knew how to suppress her impatience to hear an account of the proceedings, and still more eagerly longed to meet with the Baronet, muttering, as she turned homewards, a number of satirical speeches against Mrs. Fermor’s formalities.—She told her favourite servant,

vant, while she was dressing her, that if Mrs. Fermor had not been once married, she could have ventured any wager that she was an old maid, she was so ridiculously regular.

Before Miss Napper received the wished-for summons to Mrs. Fermor's, Miss Bloom, who had immediately missed her letters, and who, but too rightly feared, that they were fallen into Sir Charles's hands, was mortified beyond expression, though not surprized, at the receipt of his billet.

After having inveighed with the utmost vehemence, both against Bell Napper for her treachery, and against Mrs. Fermor for her impertinent advice, the ill-timing of which had been so destructive to her hopes, she determined to have no further connections with either of them.

Catching

Catching a transient view of her face as she passed the glass, she received new spirits from the vivid glow of her complexion, arising from the flurry into which she had been thrown by the behaviour of a couple of insignificant jealous creatures, who could not yet hinder her from making her fortune while she preserved her charms in full lustre, whose envy and prudery equally provoked her laughter and contempt; such were her reflections.

But though Harriot Bloom was indifferent, Bell Napper still continued to call on, and to send to Mrs. Fermor, without once getting admittance, however: to put an entire stop to her visits, the servant was, indeed, ordered at last to tell her, that Mrs. Fermor would always be engaged to her.

Irritated almost to madness by so decisive a message, she scrupled not to abuse that

that lady wherever she went ; but as she was totally ignorant of what she said, her imagination easily enabled her to suppose that she did not speak very favourably about her. To a person who detested the motives by which miss Napper had been actuated, her society could not be very agreeable, and as Mrs. Fermor was really that person, she gave herself no farther trouble concerning so unworthy an object.

Mrs. Fermor, indeed, expected an answer to her letter to Harriot, as she had written to her out of pure, disinterested friendship, and merely to persuade her to be wiser and better, in order to be happier ; but as no answer came, she began to fear that she had actually been mistaken in her ; and that her heart was not so good as she had imagined it to be. She, therefore, readily gave up her two young acquaintance, as she had shaken off

off many of her old ones, and betook herself to her books and her needle, her constant and never wearying amusements.

At the distance of about a fortnight from his first visit, Sir Charles Leusum came in one afternoon. He made a little apology for having been absent so long, but excused himself by saying,  
“ that he had been in town ever since  
“ he had the pleasure of seeing her, and  
“ that his endeavours to procure some-  
“ thing for Smith, (the unfortunate man  
“ who had, through the severest distress,  
“ been instigated to commit the above-  
“ mentioned robbery) had kept him  
“ longer than he intended to stay. I  
“ have, however,” continued he, “ at  
“ length, succeeded, and am going to  
“ send him and his family to North-  
“ America. I am just come from him;  
“ never did my heart feel higher trans-  
“ port

“ port than at the satisfaction and gra-  
“ titude which those poor creatures  
“ expressed for the provision which I  
“ had endeavoured to make for them ;  
“ and I own I could not rest, my dear  
“ Mrs. Fermor, till I had given you the  
“ pleasure your excellent heart will, I  
“ am sure, feel at being informed that  
“ the penitent sufferer is likely, through  
“ your means, to be happy after all his  
“ infelicity.”

END of the FIRST Book.

BOOK

228 VOLTAZIONE DEL

UNA COIFERIA CON UNA  
SALUTARE DOPPIA DI  
TUTTO IL TERRITORIO  
DEL MARE DI JAPAN  
E DELLA CINA. E' STATA  
CONSIDERATA DA  
MOLTI UOMINI  
E SOCIETÀ  
PER LA SUA  
GRANDEZZA  
E PER IL  
VALORE  
DEI GEMMI  
E DI ALTRE  
COSTANZE  
CHE  
LA COMPOSTO.

LE PIRENEE SON  
UNA CATENA  
DI MONTAGGI  
CHE SI ESTENDONO  
DA OVEST  
AD EST  
SUL TERRITORIO  
DELLA FRANCIA  
E DELLA SPAGNA.

## BOOK II.

“ *M*Y means, Sir Charles?” cried  
she, “ surely I have done no-  
thing at all in the affair: they owe  
every thing to your benevolence.”

“ Indeed, indeed, but they owe it  
to you, my dear Madam; for had  
not you obstinately persisted in declin-  
ing a prosecution, the poor creature  
might have been ready to swing ere  
now.”

“ I can take no merit to myself, Sir,”  
said Mrs. Fermor, “ for acting agreeably  
to the dictates of humanity and com-  
passion: but you will be pleased to  
remember, Sir Charles, that the sight  
“ of

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“ of poor Mrs. Smith, her agonizing  
“ distress, and the extreme beauty of her  
“ person, moved you to relieve her.”

“ I do not pretend, Mrs. Fermor,”  
replied he, “ to be blind to beauty ;  
“ on the contrary, no man upon earth  
“ admires it more ; but if the unfortu-  
“ nate woman had been as ugly as a  
“ witch, I think, I hope, I should not  
“ have been less inclined to serve her.”

“ I hope so too,” said she, laughing ;  
“ but, why should you apologize for  
“ admiring a pretty woman ? Beauty  
“ was created to give pleasure ; and a  
“ proper admiration of it is certainly  
“ rather a virtue than a crime : the mo-  
“ derate enjoyment of every blessing  
“ sent from Heaven is laudable in the  
“ highest degree.”

“ Excellent moralist ! how I adore  
“ this doctrine, Mrs. Fermor ! but now  
“ we are upon the subject, pray give  
me

“ me leave to ask you, how far we are,  
“ in your opinion, to carry our admi-  
“ ration, and when to stop ?”

“ Never so far as flattery,” replied  
she; “ never should you encrease the va-  
“ nity, pride, or self-conceit of any  
“ woman ; never should you, by unjust  
“ praises, and unnecessary compliments,  
“ give a fine girl reason to believe that  
“ you feel a tenderness for her when she  
“ is really an object of no consequence  
“ in your eyes; for you cannot act more  
“ ungenerously, than by kindling a pas-  
“ sion in an innocent gentle bosom,  
“ without the least intention to return  
“ it : you are, also, never to pursue a  
“ fine woman who is either already mar-  
“ ried, or honourably engaged. But as  
“ these rules, Sir Charles, are so obvi-  
“ ous to every man, who thinks at all,  
“ I am surprized that you should apply  
“ to me : I ought, indeed, to be more  
“ surprized at myself for expatiating so

“ much upon what you were so well acquainted with before.”

“ You are infinitely agreeable,” said he, with a lively accent, “ upon every subject : but where are those tender innocent bosoms I wonder ? I have not yet been happy enough to meet with one of them—all the girls with whom I have ever conversed have either been loose or mercenary ; perhaps both.”

“ I am afraid, Sir Charles, that your disappointments have been occasioned by your making your advances to wrong objects—disappointments which penetration might have prevented. The man who wishes to find felicity in the married state, must not repair to public places in search of a wife. The girls who exhibit themselves at those places seldom, I will not say never, are fit companions for a man of a domestic turn ; as they are too fond, generally,

“ nerally, of dress, diversion, and, in-  
“ deed, all kinds of dissipation, and  
“ too eager to be universally admired,  
“ ever to be content with home and a  
“ husband’s love.”

“ Where then,” said Sir Charles, “ are  
“ those gentle innocents to be found?”

“ In sober families, privately educated  
“ under the care of prudent fathers and  
“ uncles, and instructed by exemplary  
“ mothers and aunts, who, by first mak-  
“ ing them sensible that they are their  
“ best and only friends, win their affecti-  
“ ons by the mild indulgence of their  
“ behaviour, and then give them a relish  
“ for those pleasures, which, though  
“ they may not make a rapid progres-  
“ sion in a young heart, may, by proper  
“ management, make a desirable and  
“ lasting impression on it.”

While Mrs. Fermor delivered the above speech, Sir Charles surveyed her

with a fixed attention. Never had she appeared to him so thoroughly agreeable: she was at work, and the position of her arm, with the regular movement of her fingers, discovered the beauties of that arm to the greatest advantage: her eyes, also, vivid and full of expression, being frequently called off from her needle, in order to add energy to her words, not a little contributed to heighten her personal attractions.

When she paused, “ How amiable are your sentiments ! ” cried he, in a voice softened with pleasure ; “ how just are your ideas of happiness ! ” “ What a blessing would a companion for life be, formed upon so rational a plan ! ”—Here he stopped.

She, attentive to her sewing, neither regarded his looks, nor scarce heard what he said.—She had heard enough, however,

however, to know that it did not require an immediate reply, at least.

Sir Charles, as he was discovering charms which he had never observed before, was silent, that he might take a more deliberate view of them.

Finding that he did not speak, she again raised her eyes up to him, and caught him much nearer to her than she imagined him to be, gazing on her in a manner very different from that in which he had usually beheld her: but as she was not in the least touched by the closeness of his inspecting attitude, she applied herself to her needle.

At that moment, gently seizing her hand, "These fingers," said he, casting his eyes on a harpsichord which stood in the room, "are not always thus employed—do they not sometimes delight the ear, as well as charm the

“ eye ? and may I not hope to be entertained by them ?”

“ Indeed,” said she, smiling, and withdrawing her hand, “ if you expect any entertainment of that kind, you will be heavily disappointed. I love musick extremely ; it helps to divert my lonely hours, but I am not capable of giving pleasure as a performer to any creature except myself.—I even play so execrably, that my little Fido (looking at her dog that lay asleep at her feet) cannot bear to hear me ; always expressing his dislike, either by leaving the room, or whining out his discontent at my dismal execution.”

“ I am not inclined to depend upon Fido’s judgment,” replied Sir Charles, “ my dear Mrs. Fermor ; I beg that I may judge for myself.”

“ As

“ As I hate all affectation,” said she, “ rising immediately, and going to the instrument, I will convince you in a moment, that the poor animal has an exceeding good ear.”

She sat down, and played with exquisite ease and taste a concerto of Giardini’s, while the little beast grunted his disapprobation, and the baronet expressed his acknowledgments for the pleasure which she had given him in the most elegant terms: and, to prove the sincerity of his expressions, he earnestly intreated her to favour him with another lesson.

He was so earnest in his intreaties that she cheerfully complied with them, telling him, however, that she had some work upon her hands which required dispatch, and could hardly forgive him for detaining her from it, in order to employ her about what would not make

her appear in an advantageous light.—  
“ Don’t attempt to address any fine  
“ speeches to me, Sir Charles,” continued she, seeing him look at her with pleasure, “ I am not at all satisfied with  
“ my playing, and your encomiums will  
“ not tend to render me more so.”

“ You have, then, no opinion of my  
“ taste in musick,” said he gravely, fixing his eyes on her—“ nor in any thing  
“ else, I fear.”—An half-suppressed sigh hindered him from proceeding.—He was silent.

She then took up her work, and hearing the clock strike, “ It is nine, Sir Charles,” said she, “ an hour at which  
“ I always retire.”

He rose immediately; begged pardon for intruding upon her time, and took his leave, with his mind more agitated by his evening’s entertainment than he thought it would have been. In his

way

way home, and on his arrival there, Mrs. Fermor engrossed all his attention : the melody of her voice, the animated motion of her eyes, and the good sense which she delivered, all made too strong an impression upon his imagination to be easily expunged : and while he was under the power of that impression, he felt himself strongly disposed to pronounce her the most unlike any woman with whom he had ever conversed, and the most pleasing of her sex.

“ What then should prevent me from  
“ sitting down contented with this sen-  
“ sible, amiable creature ? she is not  
“ indeed, a beauty, nor is she a girl ;  
“ but she is very attractive ; and with  
“ regard to intellectual charms, she is  
“ superior to all the women whom I  
“ have ever met with : as to youth, she  
“ is young enough, as she is agreeable.”

With this determination he resigned himself to the sweets of sleep.

While he formed a thousand pleasing schemes, he, at the same time, however, thought that there was no occasion for any hurry in his movements. He had been once deceived; he was therefore resolved to take time, and thoroughly scrutinize into Mrs. Fermor's conduct, before he suffered himself to be too much enamoured with her.—He was under no apprehensions of losing her, as she was neither of an age, nor had a person so striking as to draw a number of admirers: besides, her retired life would, he imagined, exclude any alarms about rivals, and as he was pretty well assured that such a fine young fellow, (without vanity he could not but be conscious that he was so reckoned) would at any time be received with pleasure, he made himself perfectly easy, and renewed his visit

visit the next morning with all the self-satisfaction imaginable.

Mrs. Fermor received him with rather more reserve than she had done the preceding evening—for as soon as he had quitted her house, upon her telling him it was nine o'clock, her maid brought in a fine brace of pheasants which Sir Charles's servant had desired her not to carry to her mistress till his master was gone.

Mrs. Fermor, therefore, who was not fond of being under obligations to any body, thanked him in a manner which shewed that she would have been as well pleased if he had not presented the birds to her.

Sir Charles presently saw the coolness with which she received him, and being willing to obviate any objection which she might make to his civilities, told her, that the obligations under which

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she had laid him, by being the cause of his deliverance from Harriet Bloom, could never be cancelled by such trifles, of which, he hoped, however, that she would accept, till it was in his power to be grateful with a better grace.

“ You owe me nothing,” said she, gravely, “ but if you imagined that you was indebted to me, I am over paid by the provision which you have made for poor Smith and his unfortunate family ; as I was quite incapacitated, by my situation in life, from doing what I wished to do for them.”

“ So god-like a disposition,” replied Sir Charles, “ which, regardless of itself, seeks only to promote the good of others, deserves a more enlarged power of conferring benefits ; make me, therefore, madam, as far as my fortune and influence can extend, subservient to those noble purposes.”

Mrs.

Mrs. Fermor's reply was a graceful motion of her head; and she gave an instantaneous turn to the conversation.

From that day his visits were very frequent; and as he contrived to drop in, as if quite accidentally, sometimes at one hour, sometimes at another, he soon found out her style of living.

As she had not the least suspicion of his having any design by his irregular calls on her, he found her always neat, though plain, and dressed with an unstudied elegance: sometimes at her harpsichord, often reading, but most commonly at her work. If she was not so employed with her needle, at his entrance she generally took it up soon afterwards, saying, "There is no excuse for idleness."

Her conversation was easy, sensible, and polite; yet did she never, by too strict an adherence to politeness, make the

the slightest deviation from truth, which governed all her words, and directed all her actions ; nor did her politeness prevent her from discovering the difference of her opinion from that of Sir Charles : she very freely disclosed her sentiments when they were demanded ; but though she disclosed her sentiments with spirit, there was a modesty and delicacy in the delivery of them which charmed and convinced at the same time, and increased the felicity which he found in her company to such a degree, that he never was so well pleased as when he was conversing with her.

As to her, she looked upon him in the light in which he had appeared to her from her first acquaintance with him, as a fine young fellow, possessed of an improvable capacity, but as a man who was very much attached to the systems favoured by the fashionable world.

—How,

—How, indeed, could it be supposed, that he should be attached to any other?

—He was good-natured, generous and benevolent; not unwilling to confess his errors, but, from the natural warmth of his constitution, and from his youthful impetuosity, not always able to correct them.

Mrs. Fermor sometimes thought it somewhat odd that he should come so often, and sit two or three hours with her; but she imagined that he did not very well know what to do with himself while he staid in the country, as there were but few conversible men near them, and those few in a style of life quite different from his: and as he had more than once mentioned that he was making some alterations in his house and gardens, she supposed that a desire to see how his improvements went on urged him to be down at Leufum-Manor,

(so

(so was his seat called) at a season when the majority of men of his age and fortune were enjoying the pleasures of London: not in the least conjecturing that he bestowed a thought upon her, but while he was with her, whenever her opposition to some of his darling sentiments seemed to divert him, his going or staying was considered as a thing of no importance to her.—She was, 'tis true, amused with his conversation, which was undoubtedly very entertaining: to render it still more so, he furnished her with all the new books proper for her perusal as soon as they were published, by asking her opinion concerning which, and by giving his own, perpetual chat was carried on in the most chearless part of the year, when the country afforded very little, if any, diversion.

He,

He, one afternoon, brought some volumes to her, on which he was so extremely eager to hear her sentiments, that he begged her to enter upon the reading of them as soon as he left her ; adding, that he would shorten his visit for that purpose.

“ Your going away earlier than usual,” said she with a smile, “ will be altogether unnecessary, for I have some work here which I cannot leave till I have finished.”

“ Surely,” replied he, “ your work cannot be of such prodigious consequence, as you have no family : your women servants might, I imagine, do that for you.”

“ They do as much,” said she, “ as I require of them, and are fully employed ; as I, assisted by them, make the principal part of my dress and furniture

“ niture

“ nature at home. But I am not now  
“ working for myself.”

“ No!” replied Sir Charles, a little  
surprized, as he had never seen any  
body at her house, “ Pray who among  
“ your neighbours is deserving of so  
“ great a compliment?”

“ I do not know,” said she, “ whe-  
ther my present industry will be so  
meritorious, for I am making baby-  
cloaths for the wife of a poor man,  
who has already eight children; they  
have always been very industrious  
people, and maintained themselves  
comfortably, till the high price of  
provisions, and the rapid progress of  
a malignant fever through the family,  
rendered them almost incapable of  
procuring a subsistence: to increase  
their domestic distress the poor woman  
is ready to lie-in, and having no cloaths  
for the child, nor any leisure to make  
them,

“ them, I have undertaken to provide  
“ them for her. I must, therefore, lose  
“ no time, as I was not informed of her  
“ deplorable situation till the day before  
“ yesterday.”

Sir Charles, astonished at her charitable industry, lifted up his hands and eyes, and said, “ Well, though you are  
“ so good as to work for this indigent  
“ neighbour of yours, shall you not, as  
“ you have, I know, a taste for literature,  
“ be glad, when you have time,  
“ to peruse these volumes ? ”

“ Certainly,” said she, “ and if the  
“ work was for myself, I would lay it  
“ aside immediately: but I had rather  
“ deprive myself of a present satisfaction  
“ than disappoint the poor wretch in  
“ affliction.”

“ Excellent creature ! ” whispered he  
to himself, “ where is thy equal ? Come,  
“ Mrs. Fermor,” added he, aloud, “ as  
“ you

“ you well deserve to be rewarded for the  
“ trouble you are taking merely to pro-  
“ mote the happiness of a fellow-crea-  
“ ture, give me leave to read to you  
“ till you are at leisure to receive the  
“ books into your own hands.” She  
told him that he would oblige her by so  
doing, if he read well.

“ You shall judge,” replied he laugh-  
ing, “ and correct me when I am wrong.”

“ Why to tell you the truth, Sir  
“ Charles,” said she, “ I never feel more  
“ disagreeable sensations than when I  
“ hear people mutter out a parcel of  
“ words, without paying the least at-  
“ tention to expression, or endeavour-  
“ ing to do justice to the author’s mean-  
“ ing.”

“ You have made a very judicious  
“ observation, my dear Mrs. Fermor,”  
said he, taking up the book : and con-  
vinced her in a few moments, that in  
harmonious

harmonious elocution and emphatical propriety no man excelled him: he was particularly pleasing and masterly in those places where a variation of the voice was necessary to render the sense more striking.

She thanked him for the entertainment which he had afforded her, in terms which gave him a pleasure far superior to that he had just communicated to her, as he was deeply interested in becoming every way agreeable to her.

Before he quitted her, however, for the evening, he made a minute enquiry after the poor woman for whom she had been so humanely employed; and fixing her name in his pocket-book, bade her adieu.

Before she saw him again, both the man and woman came and thanked her for having recommended them to Sir Charles Leufum, who had, the former told her, sent for him, given him a couple of

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of guineas, adding, that he would allow him half a crown a week while his children were too young to earn any money, if he would bring them up to be industrious when they were able to be useful to him.

"Oh! he is a noble gentleman, madam," continued the honest fellow, "but it is owing to your goodness, Heaven bless you both."

Mrs. Fermor turned away her face to hide the emotion which the grateful creature had excited in her breast.

When she saw Sir Charles again, she expressed the greatest pleasure at the most reasonable exertion of his humanity. "I am not only exceedingly glad," continued she, "that you have been so very kind to those necessitous people, but that you have acted so judiciously in the limitation of your bounty. Had you not guarded it with such proper

restrictions,

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“ restrictions, they might have, perhaps,  
“ been inclined to bring up their chil-  
“ dren in idleness, depending upon your  
“ regular assistance.”

“ I am quite happy, madam,” said  
Sir Charles, “ when I do any thing  
“ which merits your approbation : but  
“ permit me, Mrs. Fermor, to say,  
“ that if these people are so little dis-  
“ posed to industry, as to slacken it,  
“ on receiving an unexpected supply,  
“ they are not objects worthy of our  
“ benevolence.”

“ Can you, then,” replied she, “ who  
“ are surrounded with all that affluence  
“ can bestow, indulge every idle wish,  
“ and make no allowance for the wants  
“ of your needy neighbours ? Are we  
“ not all born liable to the same pas-  
“ sions, exposed to the seductions of  
“ pleasure, and to the allurements of  
“ ease ? We are very ready to excul-  
“ pate

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“ pate ourselves from the errors into  
“ which we are led by those allurements  
“ and seductions; we, who have en-  
“ joyed the advantages of a liberal edu-  
“ cation: how much more ready should  
“ we be to pardon the frailties of our  
“ fellow-beings in the lower classes of  
“ life, destitute of such advantages;  
“ slightly instructed, if instructed at all,  
“ who consequently cannot see things  
“ in the light which we behold them,  
“ and who, meeting with many hard-  
“ ships, alleviated by few, if any, plea-  
“ surable gratifications, are glad to  
“ snatch every opportunity to gain a  
“ short respite from their daily labours,  
“ as they can never expect to obtain the  
“ indulgencies within the reach only of  
“ the opulent part of mankind.”

“ There is much justness of reason-  
“ ing in what you have said,” replied  
he, “ but a truly industrious man, who  
“ is

“ is desirous of providing for his family, should place all his happiness in that family, making his provision for it not only his chief care, but his principal pleasure ; such a man would, I should imagine, if he had more than was just requisite for a subsistence, be assiduous to lay it up, and to improve it for the benefit of his family.”

“ And suppose he did,” said she, “ his conduct would be commendable, but society, perhaps, might not be benefited by a similar conduct among people in similar stations ; for were all the poor as frugal as you would have them, they would soon acquire a contempt for the servile offices in which they were at first engaged, and nobody would be left to do the common drudgery of the world. No, Sir Charles,” continued she, “ strongly as I am inclined to relieve the indi-

“gent in times of scarcity and sickness,  
“and when they are overburthened with  
“a large family, yet I am not for suf-  
“ferring them to rise above the sphere  
“in which Providence has placed them;  
“unless an extraordinary genius, indeed,  
“breaks forth, and deserves, by his su-  
“perior powers, to be thrown into a  
“higher class: such a man will always,  
“I think, be entitled to particular no-  
“tice and encouragement.”

“You think so justly about every  
“thing, madam,” replied he, “that I  
“never leave you un-improved. I some-  
“times, I confess, oppose you merely  
“because I receive exquisite pleasure  
“from the agreeable and spirited man-  
“ner in which you plausibly defend  
“your opinions.”

“A truce to your compliments, if  
“you please, Sir Charles,” said she, “or  
“you will drive me to my harpsichord;  
“to

“ to which I always repair when I wish  
“ not to hear or to think of any thing  
“ which may be disagreeable to me.”

“ I could wish,” replied he, with a tender movement of his eyes, “ that you may never be driven there on that account by me, as much as I admire your playing; but, indeed, Mrs. Fer-  
mor, since I have had the pleasure of being acquainted with you, I have found so much reason in every thing you have said, that you must not expect me to confine my admiration of your sentiments wholly within my own bosom. I have already, I flatter myself, considerably profited by many of them, and I, at this moment, long to ask your advice upon a subject with which I am ashamed to trouble you. But why should I make apologies to you who delight in doing good; and consequently cannot, I

" hope, be disinclined to assist me in the  
" regulation of some domestic affairs,  
" which fall more immediately under  
" the inspection of a lady."

She smiled, and told him, that she should be very ready to do any service in her power.

He then informed her, that by having been lately very much down at the manor, he had more leisure than usual to examine the situation of his household, and had discovered a conspiracy among his servants to impose upon him in a manner too gross, too glaring to be endured: adding, that having allowed so much annually for the family-expences, he had reason to be particularly dissatisfied with the superintendance of his housekeeper, whom he was determined to dismiss from his service, and being at a loss to supply her place properly, begged that she would recommend one to him.

Mrs.

Mrs Fermor, after having paused a moment, said, "I have had so little commerce with the world lately, that I am really not acquainted with any person capable of setting out a table in the modern taste."

"Such a person," said he, "is by no means necessary: sobriety, integrity, and an attachment to me, are the principal qualifications I desire."

"I have some reason, then, to believe," replied she, "that I can be serviceable to you, if the person whom I have in my eye has not disposed of herself since I saw her."

Accordingly, the next day, she sent for Mrs. Loyd, who had been reduced to the necessity of going out into the world, by the extravagance of a worthless husband, by whom she was left in a distressful condition: she was gone home to her father, who was a farmer; but,

though he was in a flourishing way, he was not willing, as he had other children, to do any thing for her.

As Mrs. Fermor had known Mrs. Loyd some years, and had been witness to the prudence with which she conducted herself while she lived with her husband, she could venture to recommend her for honesty, but told Sir Charles, that she was afraid he would neither like her age, nor the plainness of her manners, being turned of forty, and not at all engaging in her person, nor polished in her language.

" My dear Mrs. Fermor," cried Sir Charles, laughing, " so much the better: did you imagine that I wanted either a mistress or a companion in this necessary gentlewoman? No, I only want a faithful and careful creature to superintend my affairs, as there

"there will be no occasion, when I  
"marry, to give my wife that trouble."

Mrs. Loyd was, therefore, received by him with much satisfaction: she accepted of the place with the most grateful thanks to Mrs. Fermor, and entered upon it with a sincere determination to do her duty with the utmost strictness.

Sir Charles in a very short time was so well pleased with his new house-keeper, that he repeated his acknowledgments to Mrs. Fermor, and called her his best, his only friend; but upon desiring to express the more forcibly his sense of the service she had done him, by making her some genteel presents, things which she could not easily purchase in that part of the country, supposing her fortune would have allowed her such indulgencies, she told him, if he persisted in treating her in that manner, she would give herself no farther con-

cern either about him or his affairs : adding, that if she had been in any shape useful to him, he had amply returned the compliment by his benevolence, and that there was, therefore, nothing due to her.

This behaviour, and indeed every part of her carriage, made her become every hour more and more agreeable to him : he saw every thing about her to excite his admiration, nothing to provoke his dislike. As he was, however, resolved to be cautious, he took an opportunity one day to speak of her to Loyd as a very sensible agreeable woman, and to hint his surprise, that such a woman could live so retired.

Mrs. Loyd, who doated on her benefactress, was loud in her praise ; declaring, that she had known her from a child ; that if there was ever a good creature in the world, she was the person :

son: that, as to her living retired, she believed she had seen company enough in her husband's time to tire her; but that she imagined she chiefly lived so much by herself, because she was nice in her acquaintance, and because very few people suited her.

Sir Charles learnt also, that Mr. Fermor was a gentleman who had spent the bulk of his fortune, but had left her all in his power. That all he found was very inconsiderable, though Mrs. Fermor, as she was an excellent œconomist, not only made it sufficient for the disbursements of her family expences, but contrived also to assist poor people into the bargain.

If Sir Charles was highly pleased with Mrs. Fermor before, he was certainly not less so after having heard an account which did her so much honour. Finding himself every hour more and more

charmed with her company, and less able to be happy without it, he determined to give a loose to his sentiments in her favour, and no longer to conceal his design, when a favorable moment arrived for the disclosure of it.

As he concluded that he could not be possibly rejected, having a strong notion that he was an irresistible object; there was an ease in his behaviour, and a freedom in his manners which distinguished him from the awkward tribe of timorous lovers. He was not deficient in any point of respect, but neither did he discover the slightest signs of timidity.

Mrs. Fermor, who had by this time been accustomed to see him in all sorts of humours, and to see him most commonly in all sorts agreeable; and who had not the smallest suspicion of his appearing in the character of a lover to her, was entirely off her guard, and in no way prepared to withstand

withstand the attack which he meditated against her heart.

Without being thoroughly persuaded that he should possess the heart of the lady whom he designed for his wife, Sir Charles was resolved not to marry upon any terms; and very rightly considering that Mrs. Fermor could not be influenced by the same motives to deceive him which directed the conduct of Miss Bloom, he gave himself up to the pleasure which he should shortly experience by being indissolubly united to her.

He was now perpetually at Mrs. Fermor's, that is, at the accustomed hours. He read to her while she worked, whenever his reading to her seemed to give her pleasure. He walked with her in her little garden, when the weather would permit, and assisted her in the disposition of her flowers, of which she was an extravagant admirer: he follow-

ed her to her poultry, beheld those birds with rapture which she distinguished as her favourites, and fed them with his own hand: his regard was also extended to her faithful Fido, whom he taught to fondle him with so much success, that the pretty animal shewed a singular satisfaction at his approach, distinguished his entrance by a particular noise, and by jumping up into the lap of his mistress to tell her who was coming.

Sir Charles now almost always drew his chair near Mrs. Fermor's, leaned upon the back of it, gazed tenderly on her while she was busy with her needle, and hung over her, enamoured, whenever she sat down to her harpsichord.

When she rose to fetch any thing, though naturally indolent, he was up in an instant, in order to reach it for her: and in giving to, or receiving any thing from

from her, contrived to touch her hand, at the same time carefully examining her face to see if his pressure occasioned an emotion; but as she really felt no emotion, there was no variation in her features, nor change in her behaviour. She had not, indeed, for a great while, the least idea of his designs, as she imagined herself to be the last person for whom he would be susceptible of any tender sensations: but though she felt no particular sensations, he was in a far more agitated state, for he really loved her, and, therefore, every touch added fresh fuel to the flame which began to be hardly supportable.

Often did he catch her hand, press it gently, and long to carry it to his lips; but he was fearful of offending her: for whenever he snatched it, she always drew it back directly; not that she guessed his meaning, she only attributed his behaviour

behaviour to a habit which he had contracted by conversing perpetually with women ; which she had not so much noticed before, because he had not till then been so frequently with her.

He saw, with surprize, and some degree of vexation, that he had hitherto made no impression upon her : he was disappointed : he was hurt ; but he was not discouraged. He well knew his own powers of pleasing, and hoped every thing from them, and from time, as he had never met with a heart totally insensible to his attractions.

As his love increased every hour, most willingly would he have availed himself of the intimacy allowed by her, to try a few softening arts to melt her soul to tenderness ; but he could not bring himself to approach the woman whom he intended for his wife, with the same familiarity with which he would treat a mistress.

He

He died with desire to awaken her sensibility, but he could not bear to lessen his respect to her, while he was considering how he should in the best manner carry his designs into execution.

One evening when he came to her door, having been detained at home all the morning by particular business, the servant said that her mistress was not well.

He started at the unexpected intelligence, not having known till that instant how truly he loved her.

He enquired after her indisposition with an eager solicitude, and asked, with an anxious importunity, if she was confined to her chamber.

On the maid's answering in the negative he entered the parlour.

Mrs. Fermor sat there in an undress, leaning her head upon her hand.

He

He flew to her, and made an apology for intruding so abruptly upon her privacy, but declared that his concern would not permit him to deny himself the pleasure of seeing her.

He took her hand in his, pressed it tenderly, and enquired after her disorder.

There was so much real pity in his looks, and his expressions of uneasiness were delivered in so soothing a voice, that Mrs. Fermor was deceived by them, and considered them only as proofs of friendship, whereas they were striking and indisputable signs of a fervent passion.

How she came to be so mistaken may, perhaps, appear wonderful, but the truth is, she did not imagine, in the least, that a man so much younger than herself; a man in the pride of youth, with a person so uncommonly handsome, could

could possibly feel the faintest inclination for a woman so many years older, and who had never any pretensions to beauty. Such a notion, in short, she had not once entertained ; and would have thought herself half distracted if she had encouraged the admission of it.

Mrs. Fermor's indisposition, however, caused such emotions in Sir Charles, that he was utterly unable to conceal them ; nor did he, indeed, endeavour to check their appearance.

Having told him, as she sat with clearless looks by him, that she had a violent head-ach, he fixed his eyes, his fine languishing eyes on her face with such a soft expression in them, that she was rather disconcerted. In her heart she could not condemn his friendly anxiety, but she blushed at it : she could not tell why she did so, but she blushed.

oldamis. He

He perceived her confusion immediately, threw down his eyes, and sighed.

After a mutual silence for a few moments, "Can nothing be done for you, " my dear Mrs. Fermor," said he, "nothing that will relieve you? I cannot bear to see you suffer thus, and take no step to remove your complaint. Ill as you are, you would pity me, if you knew how wretched I am on your account."

"There is no occasion for your being so," replied she, still blushing; "my complaint cannot possibly affect you so much."

"You do not seem to be sensible, my dear Mrs. Fermor, how deeply I am interested in every thing relating to you."

He stopped—he longed to proceed, but he feared that a procedure would be unseasonable.

As

As she made no answer, and as he was considering what to say, a second silence ensued, and a second sigh issued from the disturbed bosom of Sir Charles.

Mrs. Fermor, then, beginning to think, that his unusual seriousness arose from her being very dull company, said,  
“ I am really not capable of talking a  
“ great deal this evening ; but if you  
“ will take up that book and read to  
“ me, I will make you a dish of tea.”

He obeyed her with pleasure.

When the tea things were ready, he laid aside his book, and desired her earnestly to keep herself quiet, and to let him wait on her, assuring her with a smile, that he would do it very handily.

That speech actually made her laugh, though she was in pain—She intreated him, however, to return to his place, declaring that she chose to make it herself.

She

She made the tea, but she could not hinder him from sitting close by her side, and from taking almost all the trouble off her hands by his assiduities.

He left her at an earlier hour than usual, because he would not weary her spirits, after having paid so much attention to her, and discovered so much anxiety about her, that he filled her with no small astonishment at his behaviour.

In the morning he sent early to know how she had rested.

The message he received was, that as she was very little better, she had resolved to keep her chamber that day.

So chilling an answer increased his inquietudes : he went, therefore, himself, to hear every particular from the maid.

Another enquiry was dispatched in the middle of the day ; and, in the evening,

evening, he returned again, but went home, upon finding that she was not come down stairs.

So many proofs of his tender regard she deemed unnecessary: she looked upon them, however, as so many pleasing marks of his politeness, and intended to thank him for them when she saw him.

During Mrs. Fermor's short confinement, Sir Charles had, indeed, felt more disquietude on her account, than ever he had felt for any woman in the world, to his own no small astonishment. He plainly saw that she was absolutely necessary to his happiness, and he resolved to make an avowal of his feelings whenever he found a favourable opportunity. He would, indeed, have been glad to have first observed a strong inclination in her for him, and to have discovered in her looks an ardent desire to hear what he

he ardently wished to communicate to her : but no signs of that inclination and of that desire appearing, he considered that such extreme caution in his carriage would be needless, as she had been once married, though he had no propensity to be less respectful to her : his only apprehension was, that in case of a refusal, the acquaintance between them might be broken off ; and he could not bear to think of so disagreeable an event. " Yet why," said he to himself, " should I expect a refusal ? nothing can be more improbable : she cannot be already engaged, and she *must* like me."

Flushed with those hopes, he waited on her the next evening : her indisposition had almost left her, and she received him with unusual vivacity.

Notwithstanding his determination that nothing should hinder him from speaking upon a subject which engrossed all

all his attention, a nameless something tied up his tongue when he made an effort to enter upon it.

Frequent interruptions of that kind gave him a timid irresolute air, and kept him silent during the first part of the evening, though his assiduities about her were rather increased than lessened.

When the tea-things were removed, she took up her work as usual, and he sat with his eyes fixed upon her in such a manner, that when she happened to look up, though she was not absolutely disconcerted by the direction of them, she wished that he had not beheld her in such a penetrating attitude.

To make him, therefore, quit that attitude, she told him that he was out of spirits: " You have not, I hope, " caught the disorder which confined " me yesterday."

" Why,

“ Why, to tell you the truth, Mrs. Fermor,” said he, after a moment’s hesitation, “ my mind is not at ease, I have a great deal to say to you, but, as I cannot tell how you will receive it, I feel very awkward. Will you listen to me patiently ?”

An inclination in Mrs. Fermor to smile at the beginning of his serious address threw him a little out of his play. He averted his eyes, and sighed. Then recovering himself, “ I know,” continued he, “ you will hear me, Mrs. Fermor, but the just sense I have of your great merit, and the infinite respect to which you are, I am conscious, entitled, have intimidated me to a degree which renders me hardly capable of expressing myself agreeable to my wishes. Yet, my dear Mrs. Fermor,” taking her by both hands, and looking

looking tenderly in her face, “ do not  
“ laugh at me.”

“ I really do not understand you, Sir  
“ Charles,” replied she gravely, with-  
drawing her hands.

“ I will explain myself instantly, Ma-  
“ dam ; but you must promise first, in-  
“ deed you must, that you will not,  
“ whether what I am going to say meets  
“ with your approbation or not, drive  
“ me from you, nor deprive me of the  
“ happiness of your friendship, nor the  
“ charms of your conversation, while I  
“ am not guilty of any thing which can  
“ render so severe a chastisement justly  
“ inflicted.—Will you not promise?”  
continued he, looking eagerly at her.

“ As I cannot in the least, compre-  
“ hend your meaning,” replied she,  
“ and as I never promise without a sin-  
“ cere resolution to perform, you must  
“ excuse me.”

“ I am well acquainted with your ex-  
“ cellent principles, Madam,” said he.  
“ Those principles, together with your  
“ fine understanding, even temper, and  
“ converisible talents, not to mention  
“ a thousand other striking graces,  
“ have entirely captivated my heart,  
“ and thoroughly convinced me that my  
“ future happiness depends upon you.  
“ May I not, from the kind reception  
“ which you have given to my endea-  
“ vours to please, flatter myself with  
“ hopes that the offer of my heart and  
“ fortune will not be refused ? I always  
“ designed to marry when I could meet  
“ with the woman according to my taste:  
“ you are that dear desirable creature  
“ in every sense of the words. Can  
“ you, will you pardon this awkward  
“ address, which had been, perhaps,  
“ more correct, had I loved you less,  
“ but

“ but it never could have been more  
“ sincere ?”

If the energy and solemnity with which these words were delivered, had not convinced the astonished Mrs. Fermor, that Sir Charles did not intend to treat her in a ludicrous manner, she certainly would have imagined that he had been jesting. She remained, indeed, for a few moments, so amazed at what she heard, that she was not in a condition to utter an answer : but as he, by his supplicating eyes, and repeated pressures of her hand, which he had again taken as he sat by her, discovered his eagerness to hear her sentiments, she, after a little pause, said, “ I am, in truth, greatly surprised, Sir Charles, at what I have just now heard : if you are serious, and I cannot tell how to believe that you intended to affront me, as I have never deserved such treatment,

“ I must, after having acknowledged  
“ my just sense of the honour you do  
“ me, tell you, that I have no thoughts  
“ of marrying again: and if I had any  
“ such thoughts,” continued she smiling  
with much good humour, “ to put  
“ an end to this odd conversation, you  
“ would not be, though I have no  
“ bad opinion of you, the object of my  
“ choice.”

“ Good God ! Madam,” replied he,  
with an air strongly expressive of discontent  
and disappointment, “ what can be  
“ your reasons ?”

“ They are too many to be enumerated,” said she ; “ besides, it may  
“ neither be agreeable to you nor myself, to proceed farther on this subject : Let it suffice, that I confess  
“ myself exceedingly obliged to you for the compliment which you have  
“ paid me ; and, that while you be  
“ hav e,

“ have, as you have hitherto done,  
“ like a gentleman, I shall not seek, in  
“ compliance with your request, to  
“ break off an acquaintance which has,  
“ you have politely owned, given you  
“ pleasure. But now I have gone thus  
“ far,” continued she, seeing him pre-  
paring to answer her, “ that is all you  
“ must expect from me ; and I insist  
“ upon your calling another subject.”

“ You will, I hope, nevertheless,” said  
he, with an increased dejection, “ give me  
“ leave to resume *this* at a more agree-  
“ able, and, I flatter myself, a more  
“ lucky moment for me ?”

“ There never will be a more lucky  
one,” replied she ; “ my resolution  
“ is unalterably fixed, and I shall never  
“ change it : a resolution which will, I  
“ believe, prove in the end very fortu-  
“ nate for you.”

“ Heavens ! Madam,” cried he, “ how  
G 3      “ exquisitely

“ exquisitely you distress me!” and then, after a pause, during which his expressive eyes almost out-talked his eloquent tongue, “ certainly, Mrs. Fermor,” continued he, “ if I could but make you perfectly sensible of the tender sensations which my heart feels for you, you would, I am inclined to hope, endeavour to overlook those things in me and my character, which have urged you to so cruel a determination against me; at least, till I could alter them; and alter them I assuredly will, be but you so generous as to point them out to me.”

“ I have told you, Sir,” said she, very gravely, “ that I do not intend to marry again. I am aware that you may possibly look upon this declaration as the language of all widows, and that I shall be, nevertheless, glad to adopt other sentiments hereafter; but you are

“ are mistaken if you are of that opinion ; and, as to making any change in yourself, are you willing to become less young and handsome for my sake ?”

“ I am, indeed I am,” cried he eagerly ; “ but surely you can’t be serious. I am not vain enough to reckon upon my person, and every day will weaken your objection to my youth. But you rally me now, Mrs. Fermor, nay, you treat me unmercifully. You cannot mean what you have just said ?”

“ I can truly,” said she, “ and I should think you guilty of the most inexcusable imprudence, if you married a woman so much older than yourself. Could you possibly mean seriously what you said ?”

“ By all my hopes of happiness ; by every thing most sacred, I mean to

“ make you mine by the strongest ties  
“ of love and honour; and were there  
“ any more strong, more binding, I  
“ would joyfully submit to them to in-  
“ sure you mine for ever: nor can I yet  
“ give up my pretensions, in spite of  
“ your discouraging speeches. Take  
“ time to consider, if I make no ob-  
“ jection to the difference of age be-  
“ tween us, which can be but trifling,  
“ what can you possibly advance in op-  
“ position to it, if I love you as well  
“ as, nay better than if you were but  
“ fifteen, as I certainly do? Don't I  
“ shew my judgment in chusing a wo-  
“ man whose understanding is arrived  
“ at maturity, and whose blameless con-  
“ duct, during the years she has been  
“ under her own management, has pro-  
“ ved her to be worthy of the sincerest  
“ esteem, the most ardent affection? In  
“ chusing a woman whose person, though  
“ not

“ not so beautiful as to dazzle the sens-  
“ es without touching the heart, is still  
“ something more, as it is agreeable in  
“ the highest degree: a person which  
“ appears to additional advantage every  
“ time I see it, with new, with bewitch-  
“ ing graces which steal me from my-  
“ self? Were not your person so allur-  
“ ing, your conversation is so perpe-  
“ tually varied, so uncommonly enter-  
“ taining, that I wish, while I listen to  
“ you, to be all ear; as I am, while I  
“ look upon you, all eye. Think you  
“ then, that I can, under so rational an  
“ intoxication, feel any change in my  
“ heart by reflecting on the difference  
“ of a few years, one way or the other?  
“ No, Mrs. Fermor, that excuse of  
“ yours is very unsatisfactory.”

“ Take then,” said she, smiling,  
“ any other which you like better, for  
“ I, again, seriously and honestly assure

" you, Sir Charles, for the last time,  
" that, notwithstanding the refined flat-  
" tery which you have so lavishly bestow-  
" ed upon me, I still persist in my reso-  
" lution to remain unmarried. I like  
" my present way of life extremely well;  
" too well to change it."

Sir Charles, finding that not all his reasoning nor his rhetoric made the slightest impression upon her, grew almost hopeless of obtaining the point about which he had long been so very solicitous; however, upon considering that she had not denied his first request, but that she would still admit him as an acquaintance: and considering also that the reasons urged by her against him were next to no reasons at all, he hoped to bring her, in time, to consent to his wishes.

With those hopes he retired to rest; determined to omit nothing capable of softening the heart of a woman, whose delicacy

delicacy of sentiment had so much charmed him.

While he was thus indulging self-flattery, Mrs. Fermor, altogether surprized at the proceeding of her lover, could scarcely bring herself to credit the reality of what she had heard: yet, whether he was serious or jocose, she had taken her resolution; not that she was blind to the beauty of Sir Charles's figure, or insensible to the charms of his conversation and address. She could not, however, have been said to be at all in love with him. It never entered into her head that a man of his youth and fire could ever think of such a sober, insipid creature as she supposed herself to be; but admitting that she was really as attractive in his eyes as he encouraged her to believe she was, how could she be assured of the continuance of his attachment to her? He was very captivating, but then, ac-

cording to nature and constitution, he must be equally volatile and vain : she had lived in undisturbed tranquillity ever since the death of her husband, and she had, from that period, absolutely resolved never to have a second. She therefore thought no more of Sir Charles when he was absent ; and when he was present, sometimes by laughing at him, and sometimes by not answering him at all, she made him begin to fear that she was indeed entirely indifferent about him ; but it was some time before he chose to be convinced of what gave him so much disquietude. He loved her so sincerely, that her continued refusals, instead of chilling his hopes, or disgusting him, raised his admiration of her ; nay, her very denials were more pleasing to him than the consent of any other woman would have been ; yet as he had ~~not~~ been accustomed to a refusal, it did  
not

not sit easy upon him ; and he possibly took more pains to conquer a heart so loth to yield, than he otherwise would have done.

In this situation they for a while continued, till, almost wearied with his unsuccessful attempts, and not finding the least abatement of his passion, Sir Charles determined to leave her, to go to town, and to try if change of place, and if diversions would not produce a change in his sentiments. He could not, however, prevail on himself to take a formal leave of her : he, therefore, left the manor, one morning, after having sent a genteel compliment to her, accompanied by a present of fish, game and fruit, not easily to be purchased at that season.

Mrs. Fermor had been accustomed to so much of Sir Charles's company, since his declaration, and he had taken so many and such various methods to please  
and

and entertain her, that she missed him, and the time began to lie heavy upon her hands, for the first three or four days: but after having called herself a simpleton for being so charmed with what could not, she was sensible, be of any long continuance, as it was highly improbable that a man of Sir Charles's youth, spirit, and fortune, should pin himself to her side, even had she consented to marry him, she applied to her work again with great composure, and alternately followed her former employments.

While she was thus amusing herself, according to her usual manner, before she became acquainted with him, he was launching into all the fashionable diversions to kill time, and to put the agreeable Mrs. Fermor out of his head.

In order to effect that design the better, and to exclude the impertinence of reflection,

reflection, he flew from one thing to another with a rapidity almost incredible: for as every thing which he pursued disgusted him, he was perpetually on the wing to discover some new amusement, which, when procured, soon became as insipid as every foregoing one.

Neither was the company of his friends, though the majority of them were men of taste and conversation, capable of making him amends for the loss of Mrs. Fermor; he was, therefore, upon the point of going back to her. "She has still, kindly, allowed me to visit her," said he, "and I will return to her, and enjoy that sentimental luxury which is no where else to be found, though it throws me into a languishing state for superior enjoyments."

When he made that resolution, he was going to spend the evening with a sister of

of his mother's who expected her only son from Italy.

Lady Russel, his aunt, was a sensible, agreeable woman, and fond of her nephew. Hearing him, therefore, talk of returning to the manor, she almost insisted upon his deferring his journey thither till after the arrival of Sir George, whom she hourly expected.

Not being well able to refuse his aunt such a piece of complaisance, he consented, but with no small reluctance, and as soon as he granted her request, a loud rap at the door startled them both.

Mrs. Hill and her daughter, two of lady Russel's particular friends, were announced.

Mrs. Hill, who had been very handsome, was still a fine woman ; but seldom was there a more lovely object to be seen than the young lady.

Miss

Miss Hill was between sixteen and seventeen. To the most elegant of female forms was joined an air of innocence and modesty rarely to be met with among the generality of young women of fashion, in whose circles she figured with great propriety, as she was allied, both on her father's and her mother's side, to noble families : the former had a very large estate, and no other child, so that his daughter had the most probable expectations of being a rich heiress.

Sir Charles Leusum, in spite of his attachment to Mrs. Fermor, could not behold Miss Hill with total indifference ; that is, he could not refrain from thinking her not only extremely beautiful, but beautiful in a style uncommonly delicate.

After having been a little while in the room, she ventured to join occasionally in

in the conversation. The harmony of her voice, the happy choice of her expressions, and the respectful deference in her behaviour to her mother, and to lady Russel, excited Sir Charles's attention to such a degree, that, when the ladies had finished their visit, his aunt asked him how he liked the youngest of them.

On his replying in a manner which shewed that he was pleased with her, she said, "I imagined that you would think  
" her very amiable: she is, I assure you,  
" as good as she is handsome; if you  
" have any intentions to marry, Miss  
" Hill will make a desirable wife for  
" you."

He smiled, but returned a slight answer. He had, indeed, ever since he came of age, had so many women offered to him, that he grew tired of recommendations, and had long designed to chuse

chuse for himself. The number of flattering things, however, which lady Russel said of Miss Hill, with whose family she was intimately acquainted, as their estates were contiguous in the country, made him the more inclined to listen to her.

END of the SECOND BOOK.

BOOK

et i. 351. VOTUM. VOTUM.

Ueffelreuthen et P. 351. VOTUM. VOTUM.  
Votum vobis dedit, patroverit, quoniam pote  
vixit deus tuus deus tuus deus tuus deus tuus  
vobis, hinc uera gloriatio et uer  
victoria et ueritudo et ueritas et uer  
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### BOOK III.

SIR Charles was more particularly induced by another reason to listen about Miss Hill : she had not been exhibited at public places, but, by what he could learn from lady Russel, had been brought up in a more domestic manner than that in which modern young women with large fortunes are generally educated.

" She is of a mild complying temper," added lady Russel ; " very obedient to " her parents, and naturally disposed to " be good to every body."

Such a character was quite the thing ;  
and he could not help recollecting the  
advice

advice of Mrs. Fermor, upon their first acquaintance, not to search in public places for a wife, but rather to look for one among private families of reputation. Yet was his inclination to Mrs. Fermor too great to permit him to think seriously of another just at that time : he, therefore, only listened to his aunt, without making any significant reply.

Lady Russel, wishing to see him happily married, thought that as chance had first thrown her young friend in his way, there could be no sort of harm in forwarding an acquaintance likely to be productive of much felicity to them both.

With that well-intentioned design, without saying any thing, however, concerning her scheme to the young lady, she took care to invite her whenever her nephew was to be with her. She even carried her to the play and the opera, making

making Sir Charles of the party, who was soon impelled, by the beauty of Miss Hill's person, and the simplicity of her manners, to desire to see a little more of her: the more he saw, the more reason had he to be pleased with her; for though almost a new face, at least a face not frequently seen, and of course both from its novelty and beauty much noticed, she had no pert, no coquettish airs; there was no forbidding haughtiness, no wanton forwardness in her carriage: she behaved with an unaffected modesty in public, and in private, with her own family in the presence of lady Russel and Sir Charles, with an easy freedom, which could not fail of charming a man so nice in his observations on the fair sex as was the young baronet, after having been so egregiously deceived by Miss Bloom.

Sir

Sir Charles was also more powerfully animated to pay his attentions to Miss Hill, as, by his elegant person and insinuating address he had, though undesignedly, made a very deep impression upon her mind : an impression which she visibly strove to conceal from him ; but, being entirely artless, she betrayed herself by a thousand inadvertencies, by which she rendered him thoroughly sensible of the force of his captivating powers. Yet he was still so attached to Mrs. Fermann, that the discovery gave but little satisfaction, and he could not help sighing deeply, on reflecting with what rapture he should have discovered the same propensity in her to love him. Those reflections recalled the many pleasing, the many delightful hours, which he had spent in conversing with her ; and, while he recollect ed them, he wished, earnestly wished, to enjoy them again.

He

He began to think, that she had, perhaps, by this time relented.—“Perhaps,” said he “she may have grown weary “of the loneliness of her situation, and, “repenting of her aversion to all society “but what is perfectly suitable to her refined taste, may incline to wish to see “me again: for I may, I think, without “vanity, flatter myself, that I am not disagreeable to her, or she never would “have encouraged me to visit her so “long, nor have permitted me still to see “her as a friend, after having rejected “me as a lover.”

Cheared by those enlivening hopes he resolved to go down to the manor, and see how she would receive him: and if she remained in the same cruel humour, to come back in order to give encouragement to the inclination which Miss Hill indisputably felt for him.

Having procured lady Russel's consent to his departure, though Sir George was not arrived, on a promise of a speedy return, he flew, as fast as a set of swift horses could whirl him, to Mrs. Fermor's, with his carriage loaded with new music, and new books of entertainment.

He found her, as he had left her, at her needle; neither depressed by his absence, nor elated at his re-appearance. She received him, however, with that sort of cheerfulness with which one would welcome an agreeable friend whom one had not seen for some time.

He watched her narrowly, but he could discover no stronger emotions in her behaviour to him upon his arrival.

When he had been about half an hour with her, talking on general subjects, he told her how tasteless, how insipid every thing that bore the name of pleasure had appeared to him during his stay in town; and

and that he was come not without hoping she had considered of his former proposal thoroughly, and would not, in pity to him, for ever refuse to make him happy.

—“ Tell me, my dear Mrs. Fermor,” continued he, seizing her hand, “ tell me, freely, all the objections which you can possibly frame against me; I will instantly endeavour to obviate them by an alteration in my carriage.—I will absolutely new-make myself, for the transporting pleasure of calling you my wife.”

“ I thought, Sir Charles,” replied she, gravely, withdrawing her hand, “ that I had persuaded you to abandon all expectations of making a change in my sentiments, and am sorry to find you suppose me to be of so fickle a temper. I was determined not to recede from what I said, when I answered you before; and now desire you to believe,

“ that, when I make a resolution of such  
“ consequence to my peace, it is unalter-  
“ able.”

“ Heavens! madam,” cried he, with great emotion walking up and down the room, “ is the declining all connections  
“ with me so necessary to your happiness? — “ Then I have no hopes in  
“ deed!”

He continued some time apparently in the utmost agitation, while she endeavoured to compose his fluttered spirits by varying the conversation; and vary it she did in so judicious a manner, that he came to himself by degrees.

Willing to try once more if she really felt no sensations of the tender kind for him, after a little pause, during which he fixed his eyes attentively on her face,  
“ Since I find,” said he, “ that I can make  
“ no impression upon you, I must tear  
“ you from my heart, whatever I suffer  
“ by

“ by so doing, and place in your room a  
“ lovely girl who will be much kinder,  
“ and whom I keep in suspence while I  
“ solicit your final determination ! Too  
“ plainly, I perceive,” added he, sigh-  
ing heavily, “ that it is fatal to my peace.  
“ Emilia Hill, then, must be the girl,  
“ when I can bring myself to love her  
“ well enough to marry her. She has  
“ been genteelly educated, she is mo-  
“ dest, sensible, and tender; she is young,  
“ beautiful as an angel, and just the very  
“ sort of girl you recommended as a pro-  
“ per wife, Mrs. Fermor.”

"I am glad of it," said she, cheerfully, without the least change of countenance, "and sincerely wish that you may be happy with her."

He shook his head, and sighed, and was silent for some time.—At last,  
“When I bring down my wife, Mrs-

"Fermor," said he, "you will come  
"and see her: let us be neighbours."

"Were it in my power, Sir Charles,"  
replied she, "to be of any service to  
"her, nobody would be more ready;  
"but I am, you know, a very bad visiter:  
"I have lived so long out of the world,  
"that I am hardly fit to appear in it."

"How you wrong yourself, my dear  
"Mrs. Fermor," said he; "you are the  
"most amiable creature upon earth, and  
"are not conscious of your excellencies  
"—But it is no matter—You will, I am  
sure, be so obliging as to inform my  
wife of any thing with which she is  
not acquainted, relating to the ceco-  
nomy of my family."

Mrs. Fermor, being desirous to rouse  
him from so odd an humour, said, laugh-  
ing, that he must marry a very ignorant  
woman indeed, who could be benefitted  
by her instructions, of which no young  
lady,

lady, proper for his wife, could, she was assured, stand in need; and hastily turned the conversation to something less interesting and more diverting.

Finding that he could not prevail on her to change her resolution, he again set out for London the next morning.

Miss Hill, who loved Sir Charles much better than she was willing to suppose she did, had sighed at his absence, during which a melancholy languor was spread over her fine face; but her features were soon lighted up at his approach. The manner in which she received him, gave him more satisfaction than he expected to meet with; and, insensibly, drew him to be more particular about her. By the particularity of his behaviour, *her* passion was increased, though she had, till that moment, laboured to confine it to her own bosom: upon his nearer advances, however, so

many indubitable signs of a sincere affection appeared, that he, by nature of a tender, susceptible disposition, and warm constitution, and by his passion for Mrs. Fermor, of whom he had now not the faintest hopes, rendered warmer, tenderer, and more susceptible, yielded to the softness, the gentleness of Emilia's behaviour : he resolved to make his addresses to her, partly for her own sake, but, in a great measure, to put the other out of his head.

Sir Charles was not a man able to live long without a companion of the softer sex. The woman on whom his heart doated, would not have him. After his adventure with Miss Bloom, the herd of common girls, merely as subservient to his pleasure, he detested. He had always intended to marry, and had firmly determined never to marry a woman who did not love him. Who, then, could be

a fitter

a fitter object for him than Miss Hill?—She was the very woman.—Her education had been formed on a rational plan; she was, evidently, in love with him, and could, no way, be interested, as her fortune would be equal, if not superior, to what he had a right to expect.—Yet notwithstanding all those considerations, he could not be said to be very much enamoured with her: he could not look upon her in the desirable light in which he had long regarded Mrs. Fermor: but he thought that he loved her well enough to make her happy, or he would on no account have been induced to marry her.

—“ She is a very fine girl,” said he, “ and, therefore, will amply contribute “ to the gratification of all my sensual “ desires; she is virtuously disposed, so “ that I have nothing to fear from her: “ and I may still enjoy Mrs. Fermor’s “ conversation—no more dare I to expect

" from her—without offering the least  
" injury to my wife."

Those reflections were decisive in Miss Hill's favour.—In order to act with discretion, he went to Mr. Hill, and intreated his leave to wait upon his daughter.—Mr. Hill received his offers with satisfaction, and presently conducted him to the female part of the family.

Mrs. Hill was charmed with his person, title and fortune.

The young Emilia silently blushed her approbation—Sir Charles was too amiable, and too assiduous a lover, to be long kept in ignorance with regard to the real state of the young lady's heart—She had the entire concurrence of her parents; nay, indeed, she had their commands to receive Sir Charles in a favourable manner—and her inclination gave no disturbance to her duty. Sir Charles had soon the pleasure to learn, from her own lips,  
the

the rapid progress which he had made in her affection : but her confession was delivered with a delicate and tender timidity, which rendered her doubly attractive to a man of his taste.

Miss Hill was the amiable creature she appeared to be.—She had, indeed, but one fault, a fault which she inherited from her parents; particularly from her mother : she was too fond of *rank*; but as her importance was going to be increased by marriage with Sir Charles, and as that fondness would, consequently, be more amply gratified than by a marriage with a private gentleman in the most affluent circumstances, nothing of her ruling foible escaped her.

Emilia's future husband improved every day in her eyes. Her father and mother were not less pleased with him; and lady Russel, delighted to see so eligible a scheme for her nephew's happiness

so nearly compleated, shared the general joy.

Sir George was also returned to England, with whom Sir Charles renewed the friendship of their boyish days.

Preparations of all kinds were now making for the ceremony: the lawyers had received their full instructions, and the intended lady Leusum had given orders for some of her cloaths to be got ready.

Sir Charles was always at Mr. Hill's, or upon pleasurable parties with the family, and nothing seemed wanting to conclude the felicity of the relations on both sides, but the final ceremony.

In his retired moments, however, Sir Charles found it impossible to forget the hours which he had spent with Mrs. Fermor. Her elegant, lively, and often deeply affecting conversation was remembered by him with exquisite delight: remembered,

remembered, also, with equal delight, were her excellent principles, and her exemplary manners. An heavy sigh always followed his reflections upon the occasion, and he felt that, though Miss Hill's exterior charms allured his eyes, the internal charms, alone, of Mrs. Fer-  
mor, had touched his heart.

After having passed a night full of pleasing retrospections, he dressed and went to Mr. Hill's.

The servant, to his great surprize, said, that they were not at home.

So palpable a falsehood, as it was too early for the *ladies* of the family especially to be abroad, except on some particular occasion, startled him—He imagined that, if any such occasion had called them out at so unusual an hour, he should have had notice of their motions, in his then situation; and was, therefore,  
doubly

doubly perplexed to account for the denial.

In that perplexity he went to lady Russel; who, as she really believed that something very extraordinary had happened, made excuses for them, in order to quiet him for an hour or two.

He then called again, and met with the same rebuff.

Justly offended at this treatment, all the honest frankness of Mrs. Fermor returned with double force to his memory, and he determined to set off the next morning for the Manor.

About six in the evening a card from lady Russel, desiring, earnestly, to see him, brought him to her house.—His aunt's invitation was quite agreeable to his wishes, as he had intended not to quit the town without taking leave of her.

She was alone, and in her dressing room.

When

When he came in, she gave positive orders to be denied to every creature besides.

After having taken so prudent a precaution, she said, " Sit down, Sir Charles; " I am extremely concerned at what I " have to relate to you; more particu- " larly so, as I, in some measure, occa- " sioned your making proposals to Emily " Hill: your person and fortune entitled " you, I thought, to the first match in " the kingdom; but there is no account- " ing for the ridiculous pride of some " people—The earl of G——, it seems, " has seen Miss Hill somewhere, and, as " his rank is superior to yours, her " foolish parents have insisted upon her " giving you up for him. I have re- " ceived a detail of the whole affair " in a letter from poor Emily; who " will, I can plainly see, be miserable " by the exchange: but she is too obe- " dient

“ dient a daughter to oppose *their* authority. Now, unless you feel yourself knight-errant enough to rescue her from their power, upon the strength of a prior engagement, the poor victim must be sacrificed.”

“ I have, indeed no ambition, madam, to shine in that character,” replied Sir Charles, heartily piqued at such scandalous treatment—“ Heaven forbid I should make any attempt to render a dutiful daughter rebellious ! I freely resign her, and think that I have had a happy escape. I never should have enjoyed any felicity in being united to such a family.”

Lady Russel, by a number of apologies, and as many arguments, tried to persuade Sir Charles to interpose between Miss Hill and her parents, upon an occasion which would justify his interfering ; but her apologies and her arguments

guments were equally fruitless. He took his leave of her, thanked her for the trouble which she had taken about his affairs, and, ordering his carriage to be at the door early in the morning to convey him to the manor, retired to rest with more composure than he had felt for some time; but not without first exclaiming, "I am free, once more free: " I breathe again; what a precipice " have I escaped! I am now at liberty " to think of Mrs. Fermor, to see her, " to hear her, to talk to her, every " day; how could I ever deem it possible " for me to be happy with any other wo- " man? Let me fly, then, to the seat of " all my joys."

He rose early, hurried into his post-chaise, and was at Mrs. Fermor's at a moment when she least expected him.

She received him, however, as usual with a smile of friendship; while he, trans-  
ported

ported to see her again, pressed her hand with rapture.

"I am *not* married, my dear Mrs. Fermor," cried he, almost breathless with joy. "If I must not be yours I will be nobody's."

"How happens it," said she with great composure, "that you are not married? — I expected not to see you again till you had brought down your lady."

"Oh! name her not," said he — "I have had such a second escape!" —

He then told her in what manner he had unexpectedly gained his liberty; and concluded with saying, that, as he plainly saw he was reserved for her, he hoped she would no longer defer his happiness.

"You are not now to learn, Sir Charles," replied she, "my determination: I never make a resolution without having well considered about it, and when

" when I *have* made it, I always abide by  
" it. If, therefore, you have a mind not to  
" seem very bad company, let us call a-  
" nother subject: you know upon what  
" terms our friendship is to continue."

The steady seriousness with which she spoke those words obliged him to compliance; as the loss of her society was what he more than any thing dreaded.

After having looked a little disconcerted, and remained silent a few minutes, he began to fall into chat with her upon other topics, which she managed with great address, cheerfulness and good humour, and he went home convinced that her conversation now and then would be more eligible than the possession of the brightest beauty which the world ever produced. He, therefore, continued his visits as usual.

One day, soon after the renewal of his visits, he was surprized to see a gentle-

teel kind of man, in appearance about five and forty, sitting with her, and behaving to her with the same sort of respectful freedom as he himself did.

Sir Charles started at the sight of him, and sat down rather displeased.

Mrs. Fermor addressed him with her accustomed politeness, and kept so exact a propriety in her behaviour towards them both, that neither of them could reasonably think that he was the preferred person.

Mr. Maynard, that was the stranger's name, when the conversation began to grow general, discovered that he was not deficient either in learning, sense, or good-breeding ; yet Sir Charles found himself unaccountably unwilling to converse with him.—There was no room, indeed, for him to suppose that Mrs. Fermor preferred Mr. Maynard ; but he could not be sure that his (imagined) rival

val had not the preference.—Besides, as she had objected to his youth, here that objection was obviated: the more he reflected upon his situation, the more uneasy he became.

Growing, at last, absolutely restless, he rose up—he sat down again: he sighed—he was silent.

Mrs. Fermor seeing him disturbed, proposed several questions to him, in hopes of drawing him into conversation, in which she thought he generally shone: but his looks were so wild, and his replies so vague, that his powers of pleasing forsook him, and he rather exposed himself by his behaviour: he was short in his answers, fretful, peevish, and inconsistent.

Dissatisfied, however, as he was with his *rencontre*, he was determined to outstay the man who had occasioned such a disturbance to his ideas.

Mr.

Mr. Maynard, by shewing no desire to take leave, seemed to be in the same mind.

At last, the clock striking nine, Mrs. Fermor politely informed both the gentlemen that their hour was come.

Mr. Maynard respectfully wished her, and his new acquaintance, a good night.

Sir Charles lingered behind, hoping to obtain an *eclaircissement*; but as Mrs. Fermor discovered no inclination to detain him, he was obliged to follow Mr. Maynard, though with the utmost reluctance.

A smile, however, of infinite good humour, which she cast on him, as he turned, for the last time, to bid her adieu, was some sort of consolation, but it was only a momentary one; for, as soon as he arrived at home, a thousand jealous fancies tormented him. He could feel no peace

peace till he had heard upon what terms the stranger whom he had seen was with Mrs. Fermor. In vain did he, on the approach of night, endeavour to compose himself to rest: sleep fled from his eyelids; he thought every hour seven till the time caine when he could decently make Mrs. Fermor a morning visit.

He ventured 'earlier than usual: his impatience to hear how Mr. Maynard became acquainted with her, was strongly pictured in his countenance; yet, as she herself knew that there was nothing very particular to relate, his impatience did not strike her.

She opened the conversation upon different subjects.

At last, unable to bear any longer the torture of suspence, he said abruptly,  
" Who was the gentleman I met here last  
" night? Forgive me, Mrs. Fermor, but  
" I cannot conceal my uneasiness—you  
will

“ will not, I hope, take delight in giving pain to an heart which doats upon you—but, I fear, his visits are too acceptable to you for *my* peace.”

“ What unaccountable fancies,” said she calmly, “ sometimes destroy our repose! You met a neighbour quietly taking a dish of tea with me; must you, therefore conclude, that we are upon an intimate footing? Has not he, in his turn, the same reason to look up on you as a very particular favourite? —But he has, I hope, more sense and discretion. I have often thought that women are very unfortunate in being entirely confined to the conversation of their own sex, too often to the most trifling and insipid part of them: for if a man, ever so prudently conversible and entertaining, happens to be frequently seen with them, though in a manner the least liable to misconstruction, he must

“ must be charged, directly, with having  
“ some design.”

“ Don’t praise, him, however,” said Sir Charles, attending only to what she had said relative to Mr. Maynard, “ I cannot bear that; who is he?—How happens it that he has more sense and discretion than all the world besides?”

“ You are not aware, Sir Charles,” replied Mrs. Fermor, “ that you are laying yourself open to censure, while you are so liberally censorious against your neighbour. I have broken through the general rules prescribed to my sex in admitting you more frequently than any other gentleman, because I thought you both remarkably agreeable in conversation, and as remarkably well-bred: but if you cannot allow any other man to have understanding, I am sorry for you: I must take the liberty to tell you that you ought to

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“ correct your vanity, or, at least, to  
“ keep it down.”

“ Oh G—d !” cried Sir Charles,  
“ how little, how very little do you  
“ know my heart !—I am but too con-  
“ scious of my inability to please you :  
“ but then, my dear Mrs. Fermor,” add-  
ed he, softening his voice, “ you must  
“ give me leave not only to lament my  
“ want of power, but also to envy every  
“ man who may have hopes of succeeding  
“ with you.”

“ You will have no reason to do either  
“ the one or the other,” said she, “ while  
“ you behave like a gentleman, as I told  
“ you before. I am pleased to see you :  
“ and am very certain, that you cannot  
“ rationally suppose Mr. Maynard is, or  
“ will be, better received than yourself,  
“ unless he conducts himself with more  
“ prudence ; as he really did, in my  
“ opinion,

“ opinion, last night, though I shewed  
“ him no distinction.”

“ And you really do not prefer him to  
“ me ?”

“ I protest,” replied she, smiling, “ I  
“ never thought of drawing any compa-  
“ rison between you.”

“ I see Mrs. Fermor,” said he, “ that  
“ I make myself very ridiculous ; but,  
“ terrified to think of being deprived of  
“ you for ever, I feel tormenting sensa-  
“ tions not to be described—Do, pray,  
“ excuse me, and indulge me with one  
“ answer more. Do you imagine that you  
“ can never be persuaded to marry this  
“ Maynard ?”

“ Have I not told you already, Sir  
“ Charles, that I do not intend to marry  
“ again ?”

“ You have, madam—but—in short,  
“ I cannot help being disturbed at your

“ acquaintance with a man of whom you  
“ seem to have a favourable opinion.”

“ You ought, rather,” said she smiling,  
“ to be pleased that I have gained an ac-  
“ quaintance worthy of my esteem—  
“ There are certainly not too many wor-  
“ thy people in the world.”

“ True madam, but would to Heaven  
“ he had not been sent hither just now—  
“ Who is he?—whence comes he?” added  
Sir Charles, with an inquisitive tone.

“ To convince you,” said she, “ that  
“ I have taken no improper step upon  
“ this occasion, I must inform you, that  
“ he is a man of character and fortune:  
“ having bought the remainder of the  
“ lease of the house and ground adjoin-  
“ ing to your park, which belongs to  
“ Budges, he and his sister are come to  
“ live here. As a neighbour, I was de-  
“ sired to visit Miss Maynard, who,  
“ though

“ though not young, is a very sensible,  
“ agreeable woman, but in a very bad  
“ state of health. As I am not fond of  
“ company, you know, I declined taking  
“ any notice of them, till sitting acci-  
“ dently together at church, Miss May-  
“ nard pressed me so earnestly, and with  
“ so much politeness, to come to see her,  
“ that I could not civilly refuse her invi-  
“ tation—Since our acquaintance, her  
“ indisposition is so much increased, that  
“ she is confined to her house—Her bro-  
“ ther came here last night to give me  
“ that information, and to desire that I  
“ would be friendly enough to call upon  
“ his sister without ceremony; adding,  
“ that if such a favour was too consider-  
“ able to be granted, he would most  
“ willingly return *her* visits for her to  
“ me.”

“ Undoubtedly,” replied Sir Charles,  
with an increased uneasiness, which he

endeavoured to hide, "Mrs. Fermor's  
" company must always be desirable."

Here a pretty long silence was kept on  
his side, while he was playing with  
Fido.

Mrs. Fermor, however, at length,  
who was sorry to see him uneasy about  
nothing, threw the conversation into such  
a diverting channel that he resumed his  
chearfulness, and parted from her rather  
more easy than he was when he entered ;  
though he was far from being satisfied  
with regard to Mr. Maynard.

Returning in the evening, and finding  
her alone, in the same conversable hu-  
mour, he was so charmed with her as to  
forget his suspicions, and gave himself  
up to the pleasure of listening to her, and  
looking at her, till the appointed hour  
of wishing her a good night arrived.

The next time he came, he had not  
made his appearance above a quarter of  
an

an hour before Mr. Maynard entered the room.

He turned aside, as if he was sick at the very sight of him, and said, in a low voice, “ What a cursed interruption ! ” while Mrs. Fermor was enquiring after the health of his sister.

Sir Charles, at first, was unusually silent in order to make observations, and remained so till Mrs. Fermor had the art to jumble them both together in conversation : but not all her good sense, and endeavours to preserve a due medium in her civilities could prevent them, especially Sir Charles, from throwing out, now and then, sarcastic repartees, which were not received by either of them with the best grace in the world.

By meer accident, at last, the conversation turned upon marriage.

Mr. Maynard ventured occasionally some warm panegyricks upon the happiness

ness of that state with a suitable companion, casting a significant glance at Mrs. Fermor, which was not unobserved by Sir Charles; though the lady, by attending closely to her work, did not perceive it.

The baronet replied, that he was certainly right, when people entered into it at a proper age; but that they became absolutely ridiculous when they married towards the decline of life. “There is “not,” added he, “in my opinion, a “more contemptible sight than an old “fellow dandling a child, to whom he “must always be looked upon in the “light of a grandfather.”

Mr. Maynard answered, that the decline of life could not be ascertained by the number of years a man had lived, but must be estimated by his constitution —“Some men,” continued he, “are perfectly strong and vigorous at fifty; while  
“others

“ others are infirm old fellows, or meer  
“ raw boys, at five and twenty.”

Sir Charles, thinking himself particularly pointed at, fired immediately, and asked him, with ineffable contempt, with a kind of intimidating tone, whom he meant by boys ?

“ Every young fellow,” replied the offended Maynard, “ who, presuming upon his title and fortune, takes the scandalous liberty of insulting those who, from more experience and judgment, neither deserve nor will put up any such affronts.”

“ Sir,” replied the angry baronet, laying his hand upon his sword, “ the lady’s presence protects you here, but we shall meet somewhere else.”

“ Hold, Sir Charles,” said Mrs. Fermor, at the same time clapping the piece of muslin which she was darning, upon his mouth, and then turning to Maynard,

I 5                  “ This

“ This is going too far, gentlemen,” continued she; “ you have both taken great liberties with each other, and if I may suppose, by the civilities which you have both paid to me, that you have some opinion of my judgment, let me, as I, by not being engaged in the conversation, must be more impartial, decide this point. For once,” added she with a smile, “ suffer a woman to think herself wiser than either of you.”

“ I shall very readily abide by your determination, madam,” said Maynard, bowing low.

“ I thank you, Sir,” replied she: “ you, then, Sir Charles, are the only person whom I have to convince of having been under a little mistake; and so ready will you, I am certain, be to acknowledge your error when you are sensible of it, that you will even

“ thank

“ thank me for having pointed it out to  
“ you.”

Sir Charles, though naturally good tempered and well bred, and very much in love with Mrs. Fermor, was warm and passionate—He could not easily brook what he deemed an insult, though he certainly had given the first offence. As he had, however, been the aggressor, he was too sincere and too noble to deny the fault which he had committed: he was liable to starts of impetuosity, but he was above any meannesses.— His antagonist, on the contrary, was fly, subtle, and designing, and having formed hopes, from Mrs. Fermor’s civility to him, with whom he was become very much pleased, that he should be successful in his addresses to her, he readily submitted every thing to her arbitration.

Mrs. Fermor, finding that Sir Charles stood rather in a sullen attitude, still cast-

ing looks of exquisite contempt at his rival, said, “I am glad, Mr. Maynard, “to see you so reasonable; but as I am “engaged for the remainder of the even-“ing, let me wish you a good night. “When I have spoken a word to Sir “Charles, I shall take the same liberty “with *him*. ”

Mr. Maynard, looking upon Mrs. Fermor’s manner of proceeding as a favourable omen, (lovers being often ready to flatter themselves) bade her adieu, and bowed to Sir Charles, who scarce returned his politeness.

When Mr. Maynard was gone, Mrs. Fermor desired Sir Charles to sit down for a few minutes, and to tell her how he came so far to forget himself as to affront a gentleman in *her* house.

“The old fellow was insolent,” replied he warmly.

“But

“ But did you not make him so,” said she, “ by your personal reflections? “ What apology can you frame, Sir “ Charles, for affronting a man who did “ not designedly offend you? Do you not, “ on such an occasion, injure your own “ character more than that of the person “ whom you attack? Does he act like a “ gentleman, or a man of honour, who “ throws out severe and ill-natured reflec- “ tions against people to their faces, with- “ out any provocation? Is it not mean- “ and ungenerous, in the highest degree, “ to endeavour to place those in a ridicu- “ lous light, who are neither ridiculous “ in themselves nor deserve to be render- “ ed so by us? Fye, Sir Charles, how “ I am deceived in you! I thought I had “ known you better: if any body had “ told me what has just fallen under my “ own observation, I would not have “ believed the charge against you.”

Sir

Sir Charles heard her out with downcast eyes : then, raising them up with a supplicating look, he said, “ Forgive a weakness, Mrs. Fermor, occasioned by my tender attachment to you alone —I see, I feel that I have been wrong; but I could not bear to think of that fellow’s indulging hopes of being a fortunate lover.”

“ Hopes of being a fortunate *lover*, Sir Charles ! Nay, now you talk strangely indeed—Have I any reason to suppose he has any *such* designs ? Or have I given him any room for encouragement if he has ?”

“ As to encouragement,” said Sir Charles, “ you know best what reason he has to expect it. But nothing can be more plain than that he is endeavouring to gain your affections—and were any woman but yourself to tell me that he is not so employed, I would not believe:

“ lieve her—You are so extremely difficult, so unconscious of your own merits, so blind to your excellencies, that you have not, I dare aver, observed that Mr. Maynard is in love with you —But though *you*, madam, are ignorant of your own powers of charming, the eyes of a man who adores you will ever be open: his heart will ever be alarmed by the greatest of all fears, the fear of seeing you in the arms of another.”

Mrs. Fermor returned no answer; but as what he had said had occasioned a train of reflections on the behaviour of Mr. Maynard, and made her thoughtfully silent, Sir Charles began to be apprehensive that she was still displeased at his preceding carriage: the pain which he felt from that apprehension far exceeded any uneasiness which he had endured from any thing which he had uttered  
to,

to her—He therefore sat with his eyes fixed on her face, while she exercised her needle, hoping to see her smile upon him as usual: but finding that she seemed not to know he was so near her, “Mrs. “Fermor,” said he, “I cannot leave you “till you have pardoned me—You have “convinced me that I have been in an “error, and I have acknowledged it—“What remains more to be done for the “obtaining of an entire forgiveness?”

“Nothing,” replied she—“But if “you should, by chance, meet Mr. “Maynard here again, you will, I hope, “behave to him as politely as you would “to any other gentleman.”

“You *must* be obeyed, madam,” said he, with a sigh, “whatever it costs “me.”

When he went home the idea of Mr. Maynard’s having formed a design upon Mrs. Fermor was still uppermost in his mind—

mind—He could think of nothing else—Her last injunction to him with regard to his behaviour to that gentleman, confirmed all his conjectures concerning him.

Sir Charles, though he was willing to allow that his dislike to Mr. Maynard arose chiefly from envy and jealousy, felt his blood rise at the very thoughts of behaving politely to him, so strongly was he, by his looks and manners, prejudiced against him: however, as he had promised Mrs. Fermor to be civil in his carriage to him, he resolved to be so, and was impatient for the hour when he might fully demonstrate the force of his passion, by the readiness of his obedience.

His eagerness to oblige her was soon gratified.

Mr. Maynard now visited Mrs. Fermor habitually, as well as Sir Charles:—

They

They met, and the latter behaved to the former with all the easy politeness so natural to him, without appearing either to shun or solicit his acquaintance.

As Mrs. Fermor, who always appeared pleased with her company, if they gave her no room to be otherwise, was remarkably cheerful, the evening passed away very pleasantly.

Sir Charles, however, not being able thoroughly to stomach the presence of Mr. Maynard, thought that he perceived a kind of sneer upon his countenance, which did not tend to promote an inclination to be farther acquainted with him. When they took leave, Sir Charles again lingered behind, and whispered in her ear, “Have I pleased you now, madam?” “Extremely,” said she, with a smile of satisfaction.

He

He snatched her hand, but she, instantly drew it back, with, "I wish you  
"a good night, Sir."

He well knew the full meaning of those few monosyllables, and retired.

He resolved, nevertheless, to see her in the morning: but he was prevented by the arrival of a particular friend of his, who being upon a journey through that part of the country, made the Manor in his way, intending to spend the day with him, to look at his new improvements, and then to pursue his route.

Mr. Maynard, by seeing Sir Charles so often at Mrs. Fermor's, began to be certain, from his style of behaviour, that he was by no means indifferent about her; and being fearful, in his turn, of supplantation, deemed it better to come to the point at once—He, therefore, embraced the first opportunity to wait on her,

her, and made a very handsome offer, of himself and of his fortune, which was pretty considerable.—To render her the more inclined to accept of his hand, he told her, that he had no family but his sister, who was genteelly provided for, and would leave his house if her removal should be required when he brought home his wife.

Mrs. Fermor, though she really had not in the least suspected him of having any such intentions, discovered no surprise: nor did she shew the smallest propensity to accede to what, he thought, a most prodigious proposal; but told him, quite composedly, that she had no design to marry again.

“ No!” said he, with a look in which pride and contempt were forcibly blended; “ will not such an offer tempt you? “ Think again, madam.”

“ No,

“ No, Sir,” replied she, with additional indifference, (for she was never angry if people offended her, she was only sorry for them, and, if she esteemed them, endeavoured to make them feel that they had been in the wrong; but if she did not make them so, a total neglect was her only revenge) “ No, Sir.—Nothing will tempt me to do any thing contrary to my inclination.”

“ So indifferent, madam ?” said he, thoroughly piqued at the cool firmness of her answer—“ but I see that Sir Charles Leusum is the man—Let me tell you, though, madam,” continued he with a sneering grin, “ he will not marry you,” laying a stress upon the word *marry*—“ say, I told you so.”—

“ Were it possible for me,” replied Mrs. Fermor in a spirited accent, “ to imagine that any thing you can say is of consequence enough to demand a moment’s

“ ment’s attention, I might, perhaps,  
“ utter a reply which you little expect ;  
“ but your behaviour is so compleatly dis-  
“ agreeable to me, that I shall only insist  
“ upon your leaving my house directly,  
“ and upou your never entering it again  
“ on any account whatever.”

“ You need not be alarmed about that,  
“ madam,” replied he, ready to burst  
with rage and disappointment, “ I shall  
“ not give you the trouble to send for  
“ your champion” (sneering strongly  
again) “ to drive me hence.”

Mrs. Fermor made no reply ; but,  
rising hastily, pulled the bell ; when the  
maid appeared, she said very calmly,  
“ Nanny, open the door directly for  
“ Mr. Maynard,” and, without speaking  
another word, with great composure  
walked up stairs.

Maynard stood a moment in the pas-  
sage, looking after her, and, when she  
was

out of sight, cried, "Fire and furies!" and rushed out of the house.

The maid, quite scared at his behaviour, ran up to her mistress, and having told her what he had said, added, "L—d, madam, he is *scarily* a mighty "passionate man."

"May be so," replied Mrs. Fermor; "he will suffer enough, Nanny: for "passion wears both the body, and the "mind."

While Mr. Maynard had thus been trying his fortune as a lover, Sir Charles Leufum was walking over his grounds with Mr. Brudenel, the gentleman who had called upon him so early.

On their coming to the bottom of the park, a view over a haha of Mr. Maynard's garden, which was laid out quite in taste, struck the eyes of Sir Charles's friend, and occasioned his asking if that also belonged to him.

"No,"

“No,” replied the Baronet, “my fa-  
“ther chose to let that part of his estate  
“to a Mr. Budge, upon a long lease, the  
“remainder of which he has disposed of  
“to one Maynard, without asking *my*  
“leave, indeed; but as Budge is account-  
“able to me for the rent, I have not ob-  
“jected to him, though there lives not,  
“possibly, a man upon earth to whom I  
“have a greater aversion.”

“Do you know any thing about  
“him?” said Mr. Brudenel.

“Not much,” replied Sir Charles,  
“but more than I like.”

“Then let me advise you to stop  
“where you are, for he will not improve  
“upon a farther acquaintance, I assure  
“you. I heard that he had bought a little  
“place in this part of the county; I  
“believe, therefore, that I cannot be  
“mistaken in my man: he has a sister  
“with him, who is in a consumption.”

“The

“ The same—But, dear George,  
“ what do you know concerning him?  
“ Tell me, instantly, because I may, by  
“ your means, save the most valuable  
“ woman in the world from being ruined  
“ by such a fellow.”

“ Ruined she certainly will be,” said Brudenel, “ if she has any connections  
“ with him.—His sister is now pining  
“ away her life, merely because he would  
“ not part with her fortune (when she  
“ might have married advantageously),  
“ which however he has no right to de-  
“ tain: but he had sagacity enough to hin-  
“ der her from finding out his roguery.  
“ He is a d—d fly, sensible, smooth-faced  
“ rascal, while he has any hopes of carry-  
“ ing his point; but when he fails, or is  
“ blown up, (and his villainous schemes  
“ have been often defeated) he then  
“ throws off the mask at once, and  
“ shews himself in his true colours: he

“ then appears what he really is, a passionate, ill-mannered brute.—But he  
“ is going to be married, you say ?”

“ He has a mind, I fancy, to one of  
“ the dearest, most agreeable creatures  
“ in the universe, but”—

“ Oh, my dear Leufum,” replied Brudenel, smiling, “ you will discover  
“ two secrets instead of one—What,  
“ you are in love with the lady your-  
“ self ?”

“ To distraction,” said Sir Charles,  
impatiently, “ but”—

“ Well, and why this agitation ? The  
“ devil’s in it if you can be afraid of such  
“ a fellow as Maynard : why he is fifty  
“ at least.”

“ Perhaps he is, but he is no bad  
“ figure ; and the lady is a—widow.”

“ No, plague take him, the fellow  
“ has a specious appearance,” said Brudenel.  
“ But he broke his first wife’s heart,  
“ the

“ the women will tell you, if that little  
“ piece in the female bosom is not too  
“ tough to be cracked.”

“ Still inveterate, George, against the  
“ fairest part of the creation?—How-  
“ ever, pr'ythee go on with your history  
“ —So, he has been married?”

“ Yes, he married a very pretty girl  
“ with a small fortune: in every thing,  
“ except matrimony, he is avaritious to  
“ an extreme, but he loves fine women:  
“ though, when once he has got posses-  
“ sion, he plays the devil with them;  
“ locks them up, and makes them live  
“ upon a mere trifle, that he may save  
“ up what he has lost by not insisting  
“ upon a large fortune: for as they are  
“ to see nobody but himself, and never  
“ to go abroad, all the expence of dress  
“ is spared: by temperance, too, he  
“ avoids the charge of a luxurious table;

“ and, as he adds, long bills at the apo-  
“ thecary’s.”

“ An admirable œconomist,” replied Sir Charles, “ but, my dear George, “ how I thank you for this intelli-  
“ gence !”

“ Which you long to communicate to  
“ your mistress, I see,” said Brudenel :  
“ but be cautious, Charles ; for though  
“ he is not a good swordsman, he is the  
“ devil at law, and”—

“ I am not afraid of him,” answered Sir Charles ; “ the lady is no tell-  
“ tale.”

“ She is then no woman, I swear,”  
said Brudenel.

“ Hold your profane tongue,” said Sir Charles, “ she is—but why should I  
“ tell you, who are an absolute infidel,  
“ what ?”

“ Why, faith, there is not much oc-  
“ casion for your wasting your breath ;  
for

“ for I see what you would say—*She* is *all*  
“ beauty, and *you* are *all* love (speaking  
“ affectedly) — But harkee, Charles,  
“ how long has this love-fit been upon  
“ you? The other day you was going  
“ to be married to Miss Hill.”

“ True; but I loved this dear creature  
“ long before.”

“ Long before that too—What, she  
“ is, then, reserved for your private  
“ amusement—Ha?”

“ Horrid insinuation!—No she is as  
“ pure as an angel.”

“ The devil she is; and a widow too?  
“ That’s a likely story, faith.—But you  
“ deal in riddles, Leufum.”

“ If it were possible to make you, one  
“ moment, serious,” replied Sir Charles,  
“ I would endeavour to describe this  
“ amiable woman to you.”

“ Come, I am, I will be serious—  
“ You are, I see confoundedly in for it

“ —On with your tale—Though I am  
“ now married, I had once as romantic  
“ an idea of passion, and all that, as any  
“ man.”

Sir Charles, for some time, declined satisfying the curiosity of his friend; but he was pressed so much by him, that at length, a desire to unbosom himself, merely for the dear pleasure of talking about the woman of whom his soul was so full, conquered all his scruples, and he related every thing that had passed from his first acquaintance with Mrs. Fermor, to the present time.

Mr. Brudenel said, in answer, that, if she really was the woman she appeared, she was an angel upon earth: but added, that he had some doubts concerning her: as he actually thought that no woman disengaged, especially no woman in her supposed circumstances, would refuse so handsome a young fellow, so much in love.

love with her, without having some very extraordinary reasons for her behaviour—“ She has some lover, in secret, dependent upon it.”

“ Impossible,” replied Sir Charles—“ I have dropped in upon her at all hours—“ She never was denied; never appeared confused; and she bears the highest character:—were you but acquainted with her, George! Oh! she is every thing for which the heart of man can wish.”

“ Why, according to your account,” said Brudenel, “ she is neither young nor handsome.”

“ She is young enough to please,” answered Sir Charles; “ when you have conversed only half an hour with her, you will hold more beauty than she is possessed of, extremely cheap indeed. She has something, in short, more captivating than beauty, which, however

K 4         “ striking

“ striking at first, gradually grows less  
“ and less alluring by time; but her  
“ charms are, every moment, improv-  
“ ing.”

“ If the warmth of your passion,” said  
Brudenel, “ had not created an imagin-  
“ ary being, very much like a divinity,  
“ she must be a fine creature, indeed—  
“ Let me see her, and judge for myself,  
“ Leufum.”

“ By no means---Besides, I dare not,  
“ were I so inclined, take such liber-  
“ ties.”

“ How the devil did this Maynard get  
“ at her?”

“ By means of his sister.”

“ Ay, there is nothing like one woman  
“ to help you to another---Well, well,  
“ Charles, if you will not introduce me, I  
“ will get intimate with some of her fe-  
“ male acquaintance, and blow you up,  
“ depend upon it”---(laughing.)

“ I defy

"I defy you," cried Sir Charles---  
"But, come, you have not seen the new  
"temple on the other side of the park---  
"Would love be propitious to me,  
"I would dedicate it, in gratitude,  
"to VENUS."

Sir Charles, in fact, wanted just then to disengage himself from his guest, that he might fly to Mrs. Fermor, and intreat her to be upon her guard against Maynard, whose character filled him with horror on her account: but Brudenel would not leave him till the evening.—He then hastened to Mrs. Fermor's.

Sir Charles entered the house of Mrs. Fermor, pale and out of breath, and looked on all sides, to be assured that they were alone, for he was quite terrified lest Maynard should break in upon him before he had warned her of her danger.

Mrs. Fermor could not but observe that he was uncommonly agitated at something.

"From whence came you, Sir  
"Charles," said she, "and what is the  
"matter with you? You look absolutely  
"frightened."

"I was afraid Mrs. Fermor," replied he, "that I should come too late; but I  
"hope"—

"Hope what?" said she, smiling com-  
posedly, "what disturbs you thus?"

"And yet, very possibly," added he,  
"after all my distraction on your account,  
"you will not listen to me, at least not  
"believe me, but tell me that I am actu-  
"ated by jealousy and envy; when, Hea-  
"ven knows the sincerity of my intenti-  
"ons, my anxious earnestness to snatch  
"you from perdition.—Oh! Mrs. Fer-  
"mor, you cannot imagine what a hypo-  
"critical devil that Maynard is—If you  
"listen

“ listen to *him* you are undone—I am  
“ certain that he pretends to love you, but  
“ such a rascal cannot love any thing but  
“ for the gratification of his own brutal  
“ appetites—Shun him, therefore, as you  
“ would”---

“ Hold, Sir Charles.—If you are in  
“ this extraordinary flutter upon Mr.  
“ Maynard’s account, make yourself  
“ easy this moment. I thank you for your  
“ care of me, whatever has been your  
“ motive, but I have given Mr. Maynard  
“ his final dismission.—You will, I be-  
“ lieve, never see him here again.”

“ Thank Heaven,” replied Sir Charles,  
“ then I breathe again.”

“ But I cannot,” said she, “ comprehend  
“ the reason of this violent emotion.”

“ Are you, then, yet to learn, Mrs.  
“ Fermor,” replied he, with a dejected  
but tender look of concern, “ that your  
“ happiness is infinitely dear to me, and

“ that, though from your aversion I am  
“ never likely to possess you myself, I  
“ could not bear to see you miserable  
“ with another?—And miserable you  
“ would certainly be with Maynard.”

“ How came you to imagine, Sir  
“ Charles, that I ever had any such de-  
“ sign?—Have I not told you, again and  
“ again, that I intend not to marry?—  
“ Why will you not believe me?”

“ Forgive me, Mrs. Fermor; but, I  
“ confess, I attributed your constant re-  
“ fusal of me, entirely to an aversion  
“ which you had conceived against me,  
“ and consequently imagined that an-  
“ other would prove more successful.”

“ And why should you imagine, Sir  
“ Charles,” said she gravely, “ that I  
“ rejected you from aversion? Surely, I  
“ have never discovered any thing like  
“ *that* in my behaviour to you.”

“ Perhaps

"Perhaps you have not," replied he with emotion, "but I hardly know what I say—I know you are too good to use any body ill who loves you.—The hourly increase, however, of my passion for you, and the small hopes of its ever being gratified, render me frequently incapable of judging properly. —But give me leave to ask why you have so settled a dislike to marriage?—Have you such a dislike to it because you loved your husband too well to bear the thoughts of another?"

"No", replied she, "because I did not love him at all."

"That is rather a reason for your marrying again," said he; "as you may stand a chance of having one more agreeable to you."

"But you will allow that I must love him first," said she, smiling.

"Would

“Would to Heaven you did, madam,” replied he with an heart-felt sigh: then, after a little pause, during which he seemed buried in thought, “How infinitely should I have pitied the man, Mrs. Fermor,” continued he, “who loved you without being beloved in return, had I known him!”

“Indeed you would not,” said she, “for that very reason!”

“You talk in riddles, madam: yet I am so interested in every thing relating to you, that I could be very glad to be informed of your motives for marrying a man whom you did not, you own so freely, love.”

“I married in obedience to a father and mother, who, by their indulgence to me, induced me to believe that they knew better what would promote my happiness, than myself.”

This

This answer of Mrs. Fermor's excited the strongest curiosity in Sir Charles to be acquainted with every particular relating to a conduct which had appeared to him inexcusable, notwithstanding his prejudices in the lady's favour: and he expressed so earnest a desire to have it cleared up to him, that she promised to give him satisfaction, though she assured him, at the same time, that what she had to say would afford him very little entertainment, as her life, while she was married, was not, in the least, happy.

" I must begin," continued she, " with telling you that my father was the younger son of a good family; but, as his parents had it not in their power to leave him a fortune, they prudently brought him up with a design that he should raise one by his own industry: and, therefore, at a proper age, placed him in a merchant's compting-house  
" where

" where he behaved so well, that, when  
" he came out of his time, his master per-  
" mitted him to have as large a share in  
" the business as the small stock which he  
" inherited from his father would allow.  
" —In that situation he was so success-  
" ful in the improvement of his affairs,  
" that he ventured to marry a young lady  
" of equal birth with his own, but not  
" possessed of a fortune so considerable as  
" he might then have expected: she  
" was fond of him, however, prudent,  
" and an excellent economist: he, there-  
" fore, paid the less regard to what she  
" brought: they lived very well satisfied  
" with each other; but my father met  
" with numberless disappointments and  
" misfortunes, which, added to a num-  
" ous offspring, though none of his chil-  
" dren, except myself, who was the last,  
" lived to above fifteen, that it was im-  
" possible for him to save any money.

¶ They

" They gave me the best education  
" they could afford : I was early taught  
" dancing, music, and French ; and,  
" after having received the first rudi-  
" ments of each, was chiefly left to my  
" mother for my improvement in them ;  
" who excelled in the two last. The  
" continual practice of my lessons, and  
" my close attention to my needle when  
" those lessons were over, prevented me  
" from having many leisure hours : so  
" that I, early, contracted an habit of  
" employing myself, which has since  
" been of inexpressible service to me.

" By this manner of spending every  
" day, I was also hindered from either  
" going out a great deal, or seeing much  
" company : and I knew less of the  
" world at seventeen, when I was mar-  
" ried, than many girls do now at ten  
" or twelve.

" At

“ At that period of my life, Mr.  
“ Fermor happened, one day, to dine  
“ with my father, having some business  
“ to transact with him. I was at table :  
“ my youth and innocence pleased him,  
“ and in about two days afterwards I was  
“ told by my father and mother that I  
“ must look upon Mr. Fermor as my  
“ husband.”

“ I was surprised, but, to confess the  
“ truth, I was neither rejoiced nor  
“ grieved at what I had heard. I had  
“ seen but few people. I certainly loved  
“ only my parents, who had, till that  
“ moment, been very gentle and kind to  
“ me : the concern, therefore, which I  
“ knew I must feel, at being separated  
“ from them, chiefly at that time occu-  
“ pied my mind. I thought, indeed, of  
“ nothing else ; I had never looked upon  
“ Mr. Fermor in a particular light, one  
“ way or the other. I had no idea of love,  
having

“ having never been talked to upon that  
“ subject ; nor had seen any man whom  
“ I preferred to another, having, from  
“ my infancy, been almost always in  
“ my mother’s apartment, except now  
“ and then in the summer, when she and  
“ my father took me to spend a few days  
“ at a little distance from town, for air  
“ and exercise ; which days were parti-  
“ cularly agreeable to me, as I was  
“ ever extremely fond of the country.  
“ On being told, therefore, that I was  
“ to be married to Mr. Fermor; and that  
“ my marriage with him, would be ad-  
“ vantageous both to myself and my fa-  
“ mily, as he would take me without any  
“ money, I only replied that I should be  
“ very much afflicted to leave my father  
“ and mother. The latter said, with a  
“ smile, if you are as obedient to Mr.  
“ Fermor, as you have been to us, you  
“ will be no-looser by the exchange.

“ From

“ From that hour, I began to pay  
“ more attention to Mr. Fermor’s per-  
“ son and manners than I had hitherto  
“ done ; but after the first sight of him  
“ as a lover, I liked him neither worse,  
“ nor better than I did before. Not  
“ that he was disagreeable in his person :  
“ he had once, indeed, I believe, been  
“ far otherwise. At the time I am  
“ speaking of, he was five and thirty,  
“ but in point of constitution, he  
“ might have been estimated at seventy,  
“ at least. He was of the middle size,  
“ not ungenteel in his form, and po-  
“ lite in his address ; but he was  
“ worn away to a meer skeleton, by  
“ having been too strongly addicted to  
“ pleasure during the youthful part of  
“ his life, and had weakened himself so  
“ much by excesses of all kinds, that  
“ he could hardly hold himself upright.  
“ His fortune too, I found afterwards,  
“ had

“ had been greatly impaired: and he  
“ was, at the time he married, so warmly  
“ attached to pleasure, that nothing, I  
“ imagine, but an intire incapacity of  
“ enjoying it could have induced him to  
“ take a wife, who was young and per-  
“ fectly innocent, and who might, he  
“ believed, serve him in the character  
“ of a mistress, without injuring his  
“ health farther, or as a nurse, whenever  
“ he should want one.

“ With those views, undoubtedly,  
“ Mr. Fermor, made love to me, ac-  
“ cording to the common phrase; that  
“ is, he lavished a profusion of caresses  
“ upon me which disgusted me beyond  
“ expression; and finding that they did  
“ not provoke me to return them,  
“ he strove to give me pleasure, as you  
“ would endeavour to please an infant,  
“ by pretty speeches, and trifling pre-  
“ sents.”

“ My

“ My mother soon perceived, as well  
“ as Mr. Fermor, that I was not charm-  
“ ed with him. He himself, indeed,  
“ complained to her of my extreme in-  
“ difference. She, therefore, took me  
“ to task, and spoke warmly in praise  
“ of him ; telling me how fondly he lov-  
“ ed me, and that if I did but return his  
“ fondness when we were married, he  
“ would let me have every thing in the  
“ world I could desire ; adding, that if I  
“ expected to see her or my father hap-  
“ py themselves, and satisfied with *me*,  
“ I must be more obliging to Mr. Fer-  
“ mor.

“ All the reply I made was a flood of  
“ tears : but having been bred in such  
“ strict obedience I dared not to oppose  
“ my parents : and, in truth, if I could  
“ have mustered up courage enough to  
“ be refractory, my affection for them  
“ would have entirely prevented me :  
“ for

“for I could sooner have died than have  
“made either of them unhappy on my  
“account—In consequence of such filial  
“sensations, I tried to appear more  
“contented with my lover, (if he could  
“be said to deserve that name,) and he,  
“charmed with my blushing timidity  
“and silent acquiescence, married me in  
“a month after his first visit.

“My father had taken care to insist  
“upon his settling on me just enough  
“for my support, in case of accidents,  
“and doubted not, from my complying  
“temper, but that I should please him,  
“and induce him to leave me all that he  
“had, which was a very moderate in-  
“come for a man of pleasure; sufficient,  
“however, for two people in a regular  
“way of life, and my father was, I be-  
“lieve, pretty certain we should not be  
“burthened with a family.

“With

“ With a heart ready to break at re-  
“ moving from my parents, who sin-  
“ cerely thought that they had promoted  
“ my happiness, as they secured a main-  
“ tenance for me, I went home with  
“ my husband, who, finding that I was  
“ of a mild disposition, and made no ob-  
“ jection to the regulations under which  
“ his family was at that time, did not  
“ use me ill: it was governed by a sort  
“ of housekeeper; by her, another female  
“ servant and a footman, the whole af-  
“ fairs of the house were managed. These  
“ three people treated me like a child,  
“ who was totally ignorant of every thing  
“ relating to domestic matters.

“ I knew, indeed, little of the world,  
“ but I had been early taught by my  
“ mother all kinds of domestic œcono-  
“ my; so that I soon discovered that Mr.  
“ Fermor was exceedingly imposed up-  
“ on by his servants.”

“ Shocked

“ Shocked at a treatment which he  
“ certainly did not deserve, as, setting a-  
“ side his violent swearing at them some-  
“ times, he was a very kind master, I  
“ ventured to hint my suspicions : but  
“ how was I surprized to hear myself  
“ thus answered !” “ You are a good  
“ girl, my dear Fanny, and mean well,  
“ but you know nothing of the world,  
“ child. There is no living without  
“ being cheated : I have been impos'd  
“ upon from my cradle to this present  
“ moment, and believe I shall be cheat-  
“ ed to my grave : if I put away these  
“ servants and hire others, I shall not be  
“ a jot the better off ; 'tis always pru-  
“ dent to wink at what we cannot help.”

“ With these, and such-like answers, I  
“ was obliged to be contented ; and, in-  
“ deed, happy would it have been for  
“ me, if I had met with no severer vexa-  
“ tion.

“ You will, possibly, wonder how a  
“ man of his turn, a man who, from his  
“ propensity to swearing, was, doubt-  
“ less, passionate, could brook such im-  
“ positions ; the truth is, those servants  
“ of his had all been of service to him in  
“ his amours, and he retained them lest  
“ he might want to employ them again  
“ in the only transactions they were fit  
“ for : they also knew his taste in every  
“ respect, and, as his declining health  
“ rendered him still more indolent than  
“ he was naturally inclined to be, he  
“ imagined that no others could please  
“ him so well, unless he gave himself  
“ an infinite deal of trouble to direct  
“ them.

“ Mr. Fermor, though he was fre-  
“ quently laid up for weeks successively,  
“ was never happy, if some of the com-  
“ panions of his former libertine hours  
“ did

“ did not share all the time which his  
“ health would permit him to bestow up-  
“ on them. As those companions were  
“ frequently forced to sit with him in his  
“ chamber, and as he insisted upon my  
“ being always near him; I was perpe-  
“ tually witness to such scenes of riot  
“ and intemperance as scarce any man  
“ in his senses would have wished his  
“ wife even to imagine. I was, there-  
“ fore, reduced to the disagreeable ne-  
“ cessity of appearing to have neither  
“ eyes nor ears: the former, indeed,  
“ were, except he wanted my personal  
“ attendance, commonly fixed on my  
“ needle, of which I was very fond, and  
“ by which I strove to amuse my mind,  
“ to keep it from dwelling on things  
“ extremely disgusting, as well as to  
“ prevent me from seeming to hear (con-  
“ sequently to exclude replies to) the

L 2                  “ questions

“ questions which were addressed to me.  
“ Questions, often so indelicate, that  
“ no woman could decently listen to  
“ them.

“ On these occasions, my apparent  
“ inattention evidently gave Mr. Fer-  
“ mor all the pleasure he was capable  
“ of enjoying; for it animated him  
“ to make a boast of my ignorance  
“ and innocence, and to declare, that  
“ there was but one chaste female in the  
“ world, and that he had found her:  
“ then was he so delighted to see his loose  
“ companions, refusing to assent to his  
“ assertion, try to make me sensible of  
“ their ribaldry, that I have been fre-  
“ quently obliged to leave the room,  
“ though in direct opposition to Mr.  
“ Fermor’s commands.

“ But that was not all—I was still  
“ more unlucky; for two of the gen-  
“ tlemen

“ tlemen who were most deserving of  
“ that appellation, distinguished them-  
“ selves by being particular to me: a  
“ lord B—, and a Mr. Scawen; the  
“ former was young and handsome, and  
“ posseſt of a cultivated understanding:  
“ the latter every way the reverse, and so  
“ diabolically vicious, that I have often  
“ wondered how any man of common  
“ ſenſe could bear his company a mo-  
“ ment. Yet this wretch took every op-  
“ portunity to make me believe, though  
“ without ſaying ſo in plain terms, that  
“ he was desperately in love with me.  
“ He beſtowed the highest encomiums  
“ on my perſon, even before my huſ-  
“ band, and was never weary of com-  
“ mending my modeſty, which was,  
“ truly, he declared, unparalleled.

“ Lord B—, on the other hand, fel-  
“ dom praifeſed me, but he ſtrove, by  
“ numberleſs affiduieties, to render him-

“ self agreeable ; at least, to make him-  
“ self observed by me, and, when he had  
“ attracted my attention, as he some-  
“ times struck upon a successful strata-  
“ gem, he fixed his eyes upon me in the  
“ most languishing manner ; then, if I  
“ caught him so employed, he threw  
“ them down immediately on the floor,  
“ fetched a deep sigh, pretended to be  
“ absent, started, said one thing for an-  
“ other, and then begged my pardon.

“ This behaviour of his lordship I  
“ could not help observing, though it  
“ made no impression upon me, and  
“ I determined to appear as if I saw no  
“ singularity in his carriage.

“ He played his farce for a consider-  
“ able time, during which, as I now and  
“ then made a short visit to my father’s,  
“ my attendance on Mr. Fermor not  
“ permitting me to go often or stay long,  
“ I opened my heart freely to my mother,  
“ and

“ and complained, with tears, of the disagreeable life I led.

“ Taking me in her arms, and tenderly embracing me, she thus answered: “ I see, but too plainly, I have long seen “ (I had been then married above three years) that you are not as happy as “ you deserve to be, and as I ever wished you to be. Your father and “ I were not sufficiently acquainted with “ Mr. Fermor’s character when we consented to your marrying him, merely, “ I am afraid, I may say, with a view to “ secure a provision for you, as your father’s affairs had long been embarrassed; and neither he nor I could endure the thoughts of leaving you friendless and unprovided for. We acted, I must own, from wrong motives, and shall be amply punished for having so acted. I am now, at this time, sinking under a disorder, brought on me, by the sharpness of my reflections.

"tions on that part of my conduct, which  
"has involved my innocent child in so  
"much unhappiness. But do not grieve,  
"my Fanny, I cannot bear to see you  
"afflict yourself for me, nor torment  
"yourself if your situation is not what  
"you merit, and what we wish it to be :  
"trust in the goodness of Providence,  
"while you are innocent, and he will  
"never forsake you: the truly deserving  
"are never entirely forsaken by him. You  
"are young ; you may, and I hope you  
"will, through the mercy of Heaven,  
"out-live your present misfortunes. Do  
"every thing consistent with honour to  
"please your husband, and take special  
"care, above all things, to guard your  
"heart from being more inclined to any  
"other man, who may appear to you in a  
"more meritorious light than your hus-  
"band does. Believe me, my dear  
"child, nothing can make you amends  
"for

“ for loss of honour. I mention this  
“ strongly to you, because there may be,  
“ among Mr Fermor’s companions,  
“ men much more seducing than him-  
“ self: but their superior agreeableness  
“ will not excuse you for having swerved  
“ from your duty in the smallest point.

“ My dearest mother, said I, pene-  
“ ntrated to the heart by her tender  
“ compassion, her excellent advice, and  
“ the uneasiness which she suffered on my  
“ account, be assured, that I am in no  
“ danger of what you have so kindly  
“ endeavoured to guard me against, as  
“ I have never yet seen a man who has  
“ made me desire to have the slightest  
“ connection with any of his sex.

“ That assurance, delivered with a si-  
“ cerity not to be doubted, made my dear  
“ mother thoroughly satisfied with me;  
“ though she never could be so with my  
“ situation. She died about a month

“ afterwards, leaving me inconsolable for  
“ her loss.

“ During the time I was so totally en-  
“ grossed by my sorrow at her death,  
“ lord B—— omitted nothing which he  
“ thought might entertain me, and pre-  
“ vent me from indulging a grief which,  
“ he feared, might be prejudicial to my  
“ health. Gladly could I have dispensed  
“ with his absence, but he knew so much  
“ of life, and told so many diverting  
“ anecdotes about people who were re-  
“ markable either for their foibles, or  
“ for the vicissitude in their affairs, that  
“ it was impossible to hear them without  
“ being amused. They had also the same  
“ effect upon Mr. Fermor, as they had  
“ upon me, who, growing worse and  
“ worse, became almost always confined  
“ to his room, except when he was go-  
“ ing from Bath to Tunbridge, and  
“ from Tunbridge to Bath, *to* which  
“ places

“ places the same set followed him,  
“ and at which he took every method  
“ prescribed by his physicians to repair  
“ a broken constitution.

“ While I was at those places, I was  
“ tolerably comfortable, as I generally  
“ mixed with some sensible, converisible  
“ people of my own sex: a felicity I  
“ could seldom or ever enjoy at home,  
“ as my own female relations were dead,  
“ and as very few of Mr. Fermor’s  
“ would, from his way of life, honour  
“ him with a visit: though, to do them  
“ justice, when they *did* come, they  
“ treated me with particular politeness.  
“ —The mother of Harriot Bloom was  
“ one of those ladies, and it was from  
“ gratitude to *her* memory that I en-  
“ deavoured to be serviceable to her  
“ daughter.

“ Mr. Fermor, however, grew, at  
“ length, too ill to perform his usual  
“ journies,

“ journies, and, indeed, to endure the  
“ noise of any of his companions, who  
“ were commonly reduced to three;  
“ lord B——, Mr. Scawen, and a Mr.  
“ Jolly, who loved wine better, I believe,  
“ than any earthly thing, besides women:  
“ yet he gave me no molestation, but stuck  
“ close to his bottle, and to my husband,  
“ though Mr. Fermor had left off drink-  
“ ing ever since I knew him.

“ I had, in truth, no occasion for any  
“ fresh persecutors; my two former ad-  
“ mirers fully employed me to defeat  
“ their designs, and to keep them at a  
“ proper distance, for, as they soon disco-  
“ vered their mutual inclinations, they  
“ were resolved, if possible, to undermine  
“ each other.

“ Mr. Scawen, in the grossest language  
“ imaginable, before Mr. Fermor, ad-  
“ vised me to be aware of the fine silken  
“ tongue, and handsome, impudent eyes  
“ of

“ of lord B——, who feized a moment,  
“ when I was alone, to inform me of  
“ Scawen’s designs against me, and in-  
“ treated me to be upon my guard; of-  
“ fering me all the assistance in his  
“ power.

I thanked them both, because I was  
“ afraid of coming to an open rupture  
“ with the friends of my husband, lest they  
“ should, instigated by revenge, preju-  
“ dice him totally against me; and I had,  
“ by that time, no other friend, as my  
“ poor father did not long survive my  
“ mother, whom he had the greatest rea-  
“ son to lament, for she was the best of  
“ wives! and I really believe that they  
“ both suffered severely for having, meer-  
“ ly to marry me to a man of *some* for-  
“ tune, made me, they thought, very  
“ miserable. You will, I imagine, allow,  
“ that I could not be very happy; I en-  
“ deavoured to love my husband, but I  
“ could

“ could not, nor would his vices permit  
“ me to esteem him: without affecting  
“ a fondness, however, which I could not  
“ feel, I strove to treat him with good  
“ manners, and good humour; and he  
“ was not dissatisfied with me.

“ In the mean while, lord B—— left  
“ nothing undone to convince me of the  
“ sincerity of his passion, and was even  
“ bold enough to solicit my consent to be  
“ legally his after Mr. Fermor’s death,  
“ as he well knew that his dissolution  
“ was not far off. Lord B—— was a man  
“ whose company I could but just endure  
“ before, because he was entertaining,  
“ but I now looked upon him with the  
“ utmost contempt and disgust, and af-  
“ fured him, in the most peremptory  
“ manner, that if he ever dared to speak  
“ to me again in such terms, Mr. Fer-  
“ mor should be certainly acquainted  
“ with

“ with his insolent behaviour : he sighed  
“ and was silent.

“ In about six weeks afterwards, Mr.  
“ Fermor fell a sacrifice to the follies of  
“ his youth. When his affairs were ex-  
“ amined they were found to be in a very  
“ indifferent situation : the rapacity of his  
“ servants, and his own taste for luxuri-  
“ ous living, even when he could not  
“ possibly enjoy it, had dissipated the  
“ greatest part of his fortune : and the  
“ addition to what my father had ob-  
“ liged him to settle on me was extreme-  
“ ly trifling : but that he left me, with  
“ all his furniture, plate, &c. &c.

“ When his debts were discharged,  
“ and when every thing was adjusted, I  
“ determined to look out for a small  
“ pleasant house in the country—The  
“ little which I had seen of rural life ap-  
“ peared quite to my taste, and I had  
“ no friend in town whom I was sorry to  
“ leave.

“ leave. I What I had seen of the world  
“ rather disgusted than pleased me. I  
“ thought I could be very well contented  
“ with retirement. Mr. Fermor left me  
“ a good collection of the most celebra-  
“ ted authors, and this harpsichord,  
“ which he bought me, just after I was  
“ married.

“ Mr. Bloom soon informed me of  
“ this small habitation, and desired me  
“ to come down and see it: I did, and  
“ liked it so well, that I have lived here  
“ almost seven years; during that time I  
“ have had a few neighbours; but as I  
“ found they were not very suitable, I  
“ have never contracted any intimacies  
“ with them: they have most of them  
“ dropped off, some through my neglect,  
“ and others through their own.

“ I should have told you also, that,  
“ when I had been in this place about  
“ half a year, lord B—— found means  
“ to

“ to introduce himself to me, and, after  
“ a number of tender speeches, propo-  
“ sed a private marriage; pretending  
“ that he was not at liberty to act other-  
“ wise during the life of an old uncle,  
“ from whom he had great expectations:  
“ but I quickly silenced him, by letting  
“ him know that I had too much spirit,  
“ and not inclination enough for him,  
“ to connive at deceiving any of his fa-  
“ mily: I felt indeed so much *disinclina-*  
“ *tion* for a man who had dared to insult  
“ me with proposals while Mr. Fermor  
“ was alive, that, were his whole fami-  
“ ly to join with him in requesting me to  
“ accept of him, I would refuse him with  
“ the same contempt I rejected him at  
“ that moment.

“ When I desired that I might never  
“ see him again, he withdrew im-  
“ mediately without returning any an-  
“ swer to me, thoroughly piqued at my  
“ pride,

" pride, I believe, which he undoubtedly  
" thought insupportable. Thus I got rid  
" of my lover, and I have since had no  
" others," added she smiling, " but  
" with whom you are acquainted."



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

